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THE BATTLES
OF PEACE

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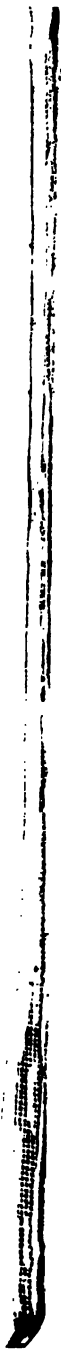
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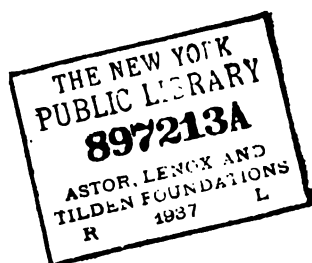
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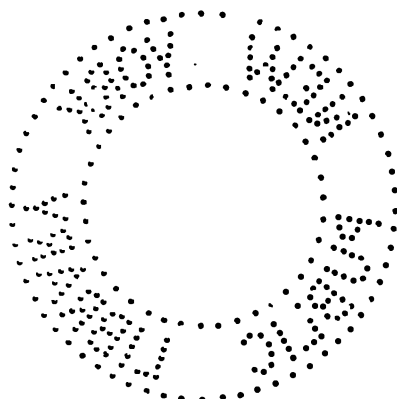




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PROPERTY OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK.

THE YEAR OF OUR LORD.

"To preach the acceptable year of the Lord."—ST. LUKE iv. 19.

It does not begin on the first of January. It begins when we are ready. Whoever hears the Lord's word and makes up his mind to do the Lord's will enters into the Lord's year. The almanac has nothing to do with it. To-day it opens, let us say, in some house on our street, while in the house next door they may not keep its new-year's day for six months, and perhaps not then. We call the calendar year "The year of our Lord," and number it, showing how long ago He came; but the real year of our Lord is just our common time lived in his name and for his sake and in his way.

In order that we may be the better able to make our common year the Lord's year, it has been filled with Christian anniversaries, with festivals and fasts. The plain days have been given Christian names.

It is a custom which seems at first to be discredited by prophets and apostles. Listen to Amos: "I hate, I despise your feast days";

and to Isaiah: "Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth."

These prophetic protests, however, are directed not against festivals but against formalism. The prophets are all protestants. One after another they rise up in the congregation and preach to the priest. Religion in their time is being made a matter of custom and convention, of attitude and ceremony; it is being taught as ritual when it ought to be taught as righteousness. And they object. "Wash you," cries Isaiah, "make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well." And Amos also, speaking in God's name, says the same thing: "Let judgment run down as water, and righteousness as a mighty stream; seek good and not evil that ye may live; hate the evil and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate."

There is no doubt about the meaning. The message is that lying lips are an abomination to the Lord; that men must not be deceived, God is not mocked; and that God is grievously displeased when men and women with hearts of indifference and lives of folly come with meek looks and folded hands into his holy presence, affecting a devotion which they neither feel nor desire to feel, thinking that God is to

be appeased for the disregard of his will by a bowing of the head and a smiting of the breast and a recitation of the phrases of penitence. It means that robbers of widows' houses are not to look for acceptance with God when for a pretence they make long prayers. It does not mean anything which applies to Christian people rightly keeping the feasts and fasts of the year of our Lord.

A like interpretation is to be put upon certain hard words of St. Paul. "Let no man therefore judge you," he writes to the Colossians, "in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days." "Ye observe days and months and times and years," he complains to the Galatians, "I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain."

The Colossians and Galatians were in danger of relapsing into Judaism. Jewish teachers were busy among them trying to persuade them that unless they were circumcised and should keep the whole ceremonial law,—which involved distinctions of food, and the observance of the Hebrew feasts and fasts—they could not be saved. The endeavor was being made to bind the wrists of the new Christianity with the fetters of the old Judaism. Against this endeavor St. Paul set him-

self with all stoutness. He taught that to be circumcised and to keep the ceremonial law amounted to a denial of Christ. No Christian who frequented Jewish synagogues, who desecrated Sunday and hallowed Saturday, who turned away from the Christian Easter to keep the Passover of the Jews, deserved the Christian name. Such a man evidently accounted the old order to be still in force; for him God had not been manifested in man, the cross was but the Roman gallows, the resurrection was a myth, and the Messiah had not come. That was the position of the Colossian and Galatian Christians who were keeping the old holy days and the new moons and the Sabbaths, observing days and months and times and years. At least, they were in danger of lapsing into that position. Moreover, the days which they were keeping, they were keeping formally, not spiritually. That was the worst of it. They were accounting these observances to be themselves essential to right living. No wonder that St. Paul was afraid lest his labor for their souls had been in vain. But he did not reprove them for keeping religious festivals, only for keeping religious festivals in a wrong way.

It would be possible, indeed, to quote some other texts which read like distinct approvals

of a course of Christian seasons. We may believe, not unreasonably, that he who bade the church before Christ to set apart days and months and times and years, and to consecrate holy days and new moons and Sabbaths, laid down thereby a principle which we in the church after Christ have no cause to put away. We may account it a matter of significance that upon the ancient Feast of the Passover, our Lord Christ was raised from the dead, and the Jewish festival was filled with Christian meaning. We may properly remember that upon the ancient Feast of Pentecost the Holy Spirit came in benediction upon the company of worshipping disciples, and thus another high day of the old order was brought over into the Christian church. God Himself has in these instances translated Jewish holy seasons into Christian anniversaries.

It is enough, however, to rest the devout custom of keeping a year of our Lord upon no other reason than that it is helpful. The Christian year commends itself to Christian people on the ground of its evident helpfulness.

The Lord commands a rest day once in seven not only because He knows that we need the day but because He knows that we need

the commandment. It is necessary, human nature being what it is, that there should be institutions and appointments and fixed dates. Without these helps, duty is likely to go undone. All days should be kept holy, but to that end it is provided that one day must be kept holy, as an example for the others.

The state, also, establishes days of patriotic commemoration. We ought to remember our national heroes and the great crises of our national history with veneration and gratitude all the year round. It is quite evident, however, that this will not be done without the definite reminders of appointed legal holidays. That is what human nature needs.

This is also the philosophy of the Christian year. The church and the state are doing the same thing. We need the church year in our life as Christians just as we need the state year in our life as citizens; because we are made that way.

See what this year of our Lord is.

We begin with Advent. We remember how He came at the first advent in his unspeakable humility, the Messiah in a manger, came in his infinite love to live our life, to save us from our sins. We remember how the same Lord is coming again at the second advent, in his glorious majesty, to execute judgment

and justice in the earth, to punish the wicked and to bless the faithful. These four weeks come at the end of the autumn and at the beginning of winter: the leaves lie in the streets, the first snow flies, nature preaches the end of things. We consider our readiness for the end and the accounting. God has committed talents to our care: what are we doing with them?

Then follows Christmas, when we kneel with the shepherds beside the Saviour's cradle, and listen to the anthems of the angels. And then Epiphany, when we worship with the wise men, like them bringing our best gifts.

Presently it is Lent, beginning in the wilderness of the temptation and ending upon Calvary hill. We remember then how our sins made Him suffer. We remember how He lived here and died for us, not that we might go on living the customary, effortless, earthward life of the world, but a higher, a heavenly, a holy life, full of the love of God as well as of our neighbor; not only empty of evil but fulfilled with good; prayerful, Godward, with glad sacrifices, putting away the good for the sake of the better; the right life of the children of a heavenly Father. We examine ourselves. We undertake a new fight against our besetting sins. We try harder

than ever to live more worthy of his love, who died for us.

Then, the third day, is Easter, hailed with alleluias and holy rejoicings, full of blessed hope and consolation. And after forty days is the Feast of the Ascension, when we repeat to ourselves his most holy promise to prepare a place for us among the heavenly habitations. Ten days, and it is Whitsunday, anniversary of the coming of the life-giving Spirit, the birthday of the Christian Church. Then Trinity and the long line of Sundays after it, that as we have considered what Christ did for us, so now we may be taught out of his holy word, in Epistle and Gospel, what He would have us do for Him, reminding us that all our words and deeds should be for love of God, and undertaken in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

All along this course of Christian seasons are days of special commemoration, marked with holy names out of the New Testament, to teach us truth and duty by examples of good men and women who saw the Master face to face. Finally, with a day of general remembrance, when to the saints of Holy Scripture we add the saints of our own acquaintance, those whom we have loved and who await us in the mysterious beyond, the

year of devotion, the cycle of the Christian creed, comes to a close.

Is it not a good year? Does it not commend itself as right and helpful? See what it does.

It helps to teach the Christian Gospel.

What is the Gospel? If we are to get our definition out of the New Testament, the Gospel is neither a series of emotions nor a series of propositions in philosophy, but the statement of a few significant facts: as that Jesus was born, lived for our example, suffered for our sins, died for our salvation, rose again from the dead, ascended into heaven, and at the last great day will be our judge. That is the Gospel. That is the message of great joy with which Christianity begins. And in the Christian year the church herself becomes a teacher of it. No neglect nor unfaithfulness on the part of the ministry can deprive the people of the blessed truths of the Gospel. The Christian year preaches the Gospel: the Gospel undistorted by prejudice or eccentricity, no doctrine dwelt upon unduly, the word of truth rightly divided, the balance evenly kept; and the Gospel undisturbed by emotional bias, not all joyful nor all tearful, not all hope nor all penitence, but with a place provided for every want of human nature, a time to grieve over sin

and a time to be glad over salvation, a time to look sorrowfully into our own hearts and a time to look up trustfully to God.

The Christian year helps to make Christ real.

Every year we live his life, walking in his holy steps. We are brought near to Him. Our great need is not more knowledge but more realization; not to learn more, but to appreciate more and more that what we have already learned is true. It was for this that St. Luke wrote his Gospel: he tells us so himself. He would impress Theophilus with the certainty of those things in which he has been instructed. That is what the keeping of the church year does for us. It brings us within plain sight of the stable and it opens heaven's gate so that we hear the angels sing. We go down into Egypt and back again to Nazareth; we are present with the doctors as the holy child asks and answers questions. John baptizes at the Jordan ford, and we stand with the crowd, and Jesus comes. And then we follow afar off into the desert while He struggles with temptation. He walks along the roads of Galilee and through the streets of towns, teaching and healing, and we behold and listen. We are in the synagogue as He reads the lesson, and on the mountain as He preaches. We as-

ceed with James and John and Peter to the transfiguration. Thus at length we stand beside the gate as He rides into Jerusalem, and in the upper chamber are at the institution of the Sacrament of Remembrance, and wait in the shadow of the garden while He prays, and follow step by step along the way where He goes carrying his cross to Calvary. There we are within the shadow of that portentous darkness, and we hear Him speak; and He dies, and we bury Him. And then in the early morning is the wonder of wonders; and by and by the uplifted hand of blessing as He goes away. It is all real. It happened. It is true. And day by day we come back to our common lives, and try to make them like his life.

So we say that the Christian year is helpful. We say that it is worth while to keep it. We know by our own experience what blessings there are in it.

Let us make it answer to its name.

AT THE END OF THE WORLD.

"It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."—HEB. ix. 27.

AFTER death, the judgment. There is no other intelligible note of time. To try to spell the mysterious meanings of ancient prophecy, to seek for days and dates, for times and seasons, between the lines of the Book of Daniel or of the Revelation of St. John, is a fruitless occupation. No man knows the path which leads to any cleared ground whence we may overlook the Valley of Decision. "Multitudes, multitudes," we are ever on the march, to stand at last before the great White Throne; but of the way and of the time we know less than the private soldier knows on the road to battle. Our part is simply to march on.

People have wearied themselves beyond measure to discover the undiscoverable. They have sometimes announced that they have found it out, and have proclaimed that upon a certain day in the current calendar the Lord will come, and they have attired themselves in garments befitting a flight into the sky, and have awaited the darkening of the sun and the

falling of the stars. But the sun has always gone on shining in unconcerned serenity, and the stars have continued in their accustomed courses, and the new day has begun like yesterday and the day before, with the visit of the milkman and the crying of the daily papers, and there has been no appearance of the Lord. The prophets have blundered in their prophecies, and must forever blunder. The facts on which to build judicious inferences are not in our possession. "Of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." Thus does Jesus Christ declare that He Himself can set no date for the Day of Judgment.

We may be sure that it will be in the "fulness of time." There are indications in the Gospels of a preface of revolutions and upheavals. "There shall be signs in the sun and in the moon and in the stars, and upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken."

There are indications of a lapse of faith and a falling away from religion. "When the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" The question suggests a negative, or

at least a doubtful answer. The old story of the Flood illustrates it;—people buying and selling, marrying and giving in marriage, laughing and diverting themselves and making money and forgetting God, heedless of all preaching, all persuasion, all warning and entreaty, until at last quite unprepared, like the foolish bridesmaids in the parable, the event overtakes them, the judge comes. Jesus came in the winter time; He may come again some other winter time, when hearts are cold.

It is sure that when He comes, be it late or soon, there will be those who are not ready. It is plain also that the right preparation for his coming is to be had not by consultation of the almanac but by diligent attention to his service. The date is of no possible consequence; the essential thing is that every one of us must give account to God for the spending of our life.

“I want to tell you something, gentlemen,” said Mr. Emerson. “Eternity is very long. Opportunity is a very little portion of it, but worth the whole of it. If God gave me my choice of the whole planet or my little farm, I should certainly take my farm.” That is what I mean. The future is uncertain, but this present day is our possession. Everything depends upon the use we make of it. This we

have and know ; God will bring all else to pass in his own time.

The same may be said concerning the manner of the judgment. That is as hidden as the time. Where will it be ? and How will it be ? The two questions may conveniently be put together, because there is no answer to either of them. We simply do not know.

It is true that the Bible seems to give an answer. St. Paul seems to know. "The Lord Himself," he says, "shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God : and the dead in Christ shall rise first : then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air : and so shall we ever be with the Lord." And St. John seems to know. "I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away ; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God ; and the books were opened, and another book was opened, which is the book of life ; and the dead were judged out of those things which are written in the books, according to their works. . . . And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire."

How plain it is,—until we come to think about it! And then how strange and inconceivable. Even to try to imagine it wearies the mind. It is like looking at an object so vast, or so bright, or so far away that it hurts the eyes. Attempt it. A trumpet in the sky, and such a mighty blast blown upon it that it is heard in Syria and in Massachusetts and in China; a sudden flying up of men and women, merchants and lawyers, clerks and housekeepers, out of shops and parlors, lecture-rooms and mills and kitchens, out of the streets into the clouds. Who can imagine it! A plain so wide that there is space upon it for all who have ever inhabited this planet in all the ages of time, from all the innumerable forgotten graveyards of this ancient earth; and in the midst a throne where every eye shall see it, and God sitting thereupon to judge us; and then a universal settlement of everlasting destiny, and a parting, some to right and some to left, some to the regions of celestial joy, others to the lake of fire.

You see that this is not to be read like a summons to a court of law. It is not to be interpreted as if it were statistical history. "Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour." That is quite a different sentence.

We know what that means. But these mystical sentences, we know not what they mean. A grammar and a dictionary are not enough to translate them. St. John in his Book of Revelation and St. Paul in his epistles, and our Lord in his mysterious prophecies of the second coming speak in symbol. They are concerned with tremendous realities which are too great for words. They cannot tell us the manner of the Great Assize. Read what they say, and read it over again; study every word of Holy Scripture which deals with the last trial of the race; you must come back after all to this: Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man that future which is known alone to God.

The time and the place and the procedure of the Final Judgment belong to Him. We need not concern ourselves about them. He will look after them.

But these three things we plainly know: that we will be judged; that the facts of the indictment will be taken out of the record of our present life; and that our judge will be the Lord.

We will be judged. That is inevitable. The discussion of eternal punishment, with the general tendency to mitigate the strong meaning of hard texts, has served to take out of

some people's theology the whole idea of punishment. That idea, however, is not touched by the discussion. Though the doctrine of an ever-burning hell be given up, the fact of inevitable penalty remains. It is true to-day and must be true forevermore, and in all worlds, that whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. The good life shall bear its blessed harvest; the indifferent life shall yield its due proportion of weeds amongst the wheat; the bad life shall be a bad life still, wherever it is lived. That is the word of Holy Scripture, and we know that it is true; it cannot be other than true.

Every day we are determining our own destiny. We are fashioning the character upon which depends our future. A man gets into college because he knows enough to pass an entrance examination; but no amount of acquaintance with books will open heaven's gate. People get into society because they live in certain streets, or have good friends, or manners, or money; but none of these things will be of the least advantage there, they simply will not count. The one requirement will be character. Happiness in the life to come will depend as inevitably upon character as the pleasure of music depends upon a hearing ear and an appreciative mind. And they who lack

will simply go to their own place. They will surely suffer for it. In the very nature of things, they will be punished. If they need it, they will be punished everlastingly. For while sin lasts, punishment must last also.

We will be judged, then, according to the lives that we have lived. According to our faith in Christ, some say : and that is true, too. Our eternal destiny will depend upon our faith in Christ. But "dead" faith will not be of any avail. It will be of exactly the same value as an unproductive seed will be in the harvest ; that is, of no value at all. Faith is revealed by life ; it is made visible by its fruit. Those will stand with Christ in the next life, who have stood with Him in this life. But they must be genuine disciples. The recitation of the creed will not be taken into account ; nor any mere conventional orthodoxy ; nor attendance upon services and sacraments ; nor any of the externals of faith. It is not likely that we will be asked in the Day of Judgment as to our religion, of what sort it was, what denominational name we called it by, or how diligent we were in our use of its spiritual privileges : God will look at us. He will see what we are. That will be enough.

That day, accordingly, will be a day of great surprises, for then we will see the real truth

face to face. Think of the amazement of scribes and Pharisees, ministers and chief church members, on the left hand ! Think of the wonder of publicans and sinners, despised folk, condemned by the respectable, yet now upon the right hand ! Jesus Christ, while He lived our life, was forever surprising people, and reversing the common estimates which were put upon their neighbors : He was forever putting down the mighty from their seats and exalting them of low degree. No doubt there are people in jail to-day who will be in heaven, and people in church who will be shut out.

For Jesus Christ will judge us. The judge will be one who knows our human life. If we are to be put on trial as to our faithfulness in our work we want somebody for our judge who knows something about work, who has fitted himself to understand us by his own experience. We will be judged at the last by one who spent a lifetime learning about human life by living it. He took our nature upon Him, and walked in the streets of our cities, and knew what it was to earn his daily bread and to be poor ; He met our temptations, He carried our sorrows ; He made our acquaintance intimately. He knows us. He will be our judge who came in great humility. The

Christ of Advent is the Christ of Christmas. The incarnation and the judgment meet in Him who said, "As the Father hath life in Himself, so hath He given to the Son to have life in Himself; and hath given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of man." He has been over the whole lesson. He has traveled the whole path. He knows how sin besets us, and how weak we are against it. He knows how dreadfully hard it is to be good.

The judge will be one who is our example. We will be estimated according to the closeness with which we have followed Him. Thus there is nothing blind nor hidden as to the test by which we will be tried. We know what sort of life He lived among us. That is the ideal by which our lives will be measured. Thus the Day of Judgment will be like an examination all of whose questions we have been told beforehand.

Best of all, the judge will be one who loves us. We know what God is like because we know the character of Jesus Christ. To whom can any simple soul look for kinder judgment or more just than to Jesus of Nazareth? Just as He stood beside the woman taken in adultery, just as He looked into the face of Peter who denied Him and of Thomas who could not be-

lieve in Him, even into his face who met Him with a traitor's kiss in the garden of Gethsemane, so will the judge be in the great day of decision. From whom would the hypocrite, the oppressor, the unjust, the cruel-hearted, hurry away more quickly than from Jesus of Nazareth who of old confronted scribes and Pharisees? So will the judge be when all the world, hypocrites and sinners, saints and penitents, those who have had great opportunities and those who have had almost no chance at all, we ourselves amidst the others, shall meet Him in the place of judgment. He who was called the friend of sinners will be our judge. He who prayed "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do," will be our judge. He who loved us and gave Himself for us, even to the death upon the cross, will be our judge. Thus we see why, at the beginning of the advent season, we read the Palm Sunday Gospel. It is because the blessed shadow of the cross of Christ will fall upon the judgment books. At the beginning of the way by which Christ goes to the throne of judgment stands the cross. At the last day He will come as He came then, looking upon us with his heart full of love, with tears in his eyes as when He wept over Jerusalem, eager to give us all the blessing

that we may be willing to take. He will be upon the throne of judgment whose hands and feet and side are marked with the prints of the passion, the evidences of his longing and his love for us.

That, indeed, is one of the most dreadful facts about the judgment,—that He who will come at last to judge us will be no enemy, and no avenger, against whom we might stir up a courage of defiance, but a friend, who loves us, and who gave his life that He might save us.

“Surely, I come quickly,” says the judge. Day by day, the months and years go by in swift succession bringing the advent near. Do we answer, “Even so come, Lord Jesus”? Is that what we want? Are we ready for his coming?

JOHN THE BAPTIST'S SERMON.

"Make straight the way of the Lord."—ST. JOHN i. 23.

THAT was John the Baptist's sermon. In that sentence he summed up the meaning of his mission. It was his errand and message. When men asked questions, desiring to know whence he came and why, and who he was, thus he answered them; bringing them away from their inquisitive consideration of the preacher to the truth which he was sent to preach, declaring that he was but a voice uttering that exhortation, trying to persuade people to hear and heed it.

John the Baptist had but one sermon. Read the reports of his various speeches, and you will see that they were all directed to one end. One thing he had to say; one thing he knew, over and over he declared it, changing his illustrations and his applications to suit his different audiences, but all the time intent on the same great matter,—to get men to straighten the crooked and uneven path of human life that the Lord might walk upon it.

God sends some men to teach theology, to make his deep truth plain and clear so that

they who are in the dark of doubt may see it shine and know which way to go. But God sent John the Baptist to preach the homely duty of building a good road. He was to send his hearers to undertake that great feat in spiritual engineering whereby the mountains are taken down to fill up the valleys. To get men to prepare their own hearts for the advent of the Lord, and to make ready the neighborhood, the parish and the town so that he might have a highway of entrance,—that was John the Baptist's task. He never tried to do anything else. He knew how to preach one sermon, for God Himself had taught him that, and he preached it over and over, in season and out of season, whenever anybody would listen.

These men with one sermon, which they know by heart and are never tired of preaching, push the reluctant race little by little into the kingdom of heaven. "This one thing I know," they cry; and they compel all the rest of us to know it. To be possessed of one great truth, and to be so in earnest over it and so enthusiastic about it that nothing else in life seems nearly so important, to study that, to declare that, to get that realized and acted upon, is to be of service. They who try to do a great many things, seldom do any of

them very well. They are as busy as they can be, but their distributed energies accomplish little. To know one thing, to do one thing, to preach one sermon, is to work on John the Baptist's plan.

It was an old sermon, too. The preacher tells us plainly that Isaiah had preached it centuries before. He did not hold it at a less value on that account. Its age commended it. For human nature and human needs are old, as old as the race. The great questions are not new questions. Where they seem to be new it is commonly because they have been translated into new words; they have simply been done into English out of hieroglyphics. Is God above me? is life before me? does God really care for me? Under all skies, and in all speech and throughout all ages, men have pondered these essential problems, and have not been satisfied till they have got some sort of answer. What does God wish me to do? How may I best please God?—Who asked that first? Adam, in Eden. When I have offended God by my misdoing, how may I get his pardon and be at one with Him again? How may I continually live with God?—These are elemental questions, knowing no distinction of time or race or religion.

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John the Baptist was wise to keep his attention fixed upon the abiding problems. The scribes, after their fashion, tried to entangle him in ecclesiastical discussion, and would gladly have enticed him into a debate upon genealogies and prerogatives and interpretations of texts and theories of the ministry. "Who art thou?" they asked. And "why baptizest thou, then, if thou art not the Christ?" But he declined to enter into their contention. He addressed himself to the immediate deep needs of men. To make his neighbors ready for the coming of his Master was his sole purpose, to level the impertinent mountains of self-conceit, to lift up the valleys of ignorance so that the sun of truth could shine upon them, to make straight Christ's way among the sons of men: no man could distract him from this task.

We are over-busy nowadays with many things that are not needful. The new crowds out the true. There is a restless spirit ever hurrying us from place to place, from one task to another, urging us to keep up with the quick procession of events. We must read all the new books, and be informed regarding all the new fanaticisms, and be contemporaneous. We are not willing either to preach or to hear old sermons.

This voice out of the wilderness teaches us

a better mind. The great, deep, simple truths which our fathers held and lived by are the best. That is what we need.

No man can be of much use to his generation who lives altogether in the present. He must stand upon the strong rock of the past. He will give the wisest counsel and be of the most service in our present troubles and perplexities and plans whose mind and heart are fixed upon the God of all the ages. John the Baptist stands by the ford of the Jordan and speaks to the consciences of men, and answers their questions, and is of use in his time, because he had lived alone with God, thinking God's thoughts after Him, enriching and strengthening his life, considering the old problems and working over the old solutions, reading the old prophets, studying the old sermons. Had he gone out at once into the distracting life of cities and spent his days beholding all the newest sights and hearing all the newest news, and his nights in reading all the latest books, he would have been no better than his neighbors, forever learning yet never arriving at the truth. Out he comes from the quiet of his prayers and peaceful studies, and the word which he speaks touches the hearts of men. It is what they need to hear.

That is, to use one of St. Paul's phrases, John the Baptist's feet are "shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace"; which we may interpret for our present purpose to mean that he is prepared to wage the tremendous warfare of his ministry by the apprenticeship of peace. He has fought the battles of peace, and has thus learned how to fight, as David strengthened himself to meet the Philistine giant by his encounters with the lions and bears of the sheep-pasture.

See how his message comes out of his own experience. In his own heart he has made the Lord's way straight, and the Lord has visited him. He knows that what he says is true, because he has verified every word of it in his own life. And he declares to his brother men with an earnestness and conviction such as experience alone can give, that if they would have God come to them with blessing they too must make the same spiritual preparation.

If we would gain the benediction of God, if we would attain that peace which passes understanding, if we would know the supreme satisfaction of religion, we must first do our part. God comes to us in many ways, in all the higher experiences of life, in books and art and music, in the sights and sounds of na-

ture, in the influences of helpful friendships. But we know very well that we must first prepare the path; we must make straight the way. God will speak to us in books, in proportion as we fit ourselves to understand the books and to hear God's voice as we turn the pages. God will bless us with the delights of music, in proportion as we cultivate our sense of hearing and increase in appreciation. God will visit us in all the crises and dilemmas of our lives, and be consciously present with us every day, so that we may walk with Him as a friend walks with his friend; but it all depends upon ourselves.

That is what St. John the Baptist preaches in his sermon.

If we are ready, God is always ready. "If Thou canst do anything, have compassion on us and help us," we cry in our distress or need; but He answers "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." It means that if we will but hold out our hand to Him, He will surely take it; if we make the way straight from Him to us, He will never fail to come.

When we set barriers across that path, and heap the road with obstacles and break the bridges, we must not wonder if God seems far away. Our sins separate us from Him.

Mountain ridges of selfishness forbid his advent: we must dig them down. The low-lying marshes, where the fog hangs and venomous creatures creep, keep Him at a distance: we must fill them up. We must lift these mean levels into the blessed light. We must set a succession of good deeds across this swamp as stepping-stones for God. Certain it is that no man ever made the way of the Lord straight, and waited in vain for the Lord's coming.

What is true of our own hearts is true also of the visit of God to every parish and neighborhood and town. The kingdom of God for which we pray is coming just as fast as we make the road for it. When we really want it, and open the way for it, it will be here. That strong promise of Jesus Christ, "Ask and ye shall receive," holds true; only we must do more than ask with our lips; our hearts and hands must join in the petition. Society gets everything that it thus asks for. When, having done our part, we ask God to do his, our prayer is always answered.

When a divided church, rent into jealous and competing denominations, prays for the speedy coming of God's kingdom, the prayer must go unanswered. What have we done? We have built sectarian fences straight across the road, we have blocked the way with stout stone walls,

whose picturesque towers of thirteenth century gothic do not make satisfactory amends for the absence of hospitable gates, and we expect the triumphal procession of the heavenly King to come along this beleaguered and obstructed way. It is impossible. God waits for a sincere invitation. When we make his way straight, He will come.

The same is true of a community which prays daily that God's will may be done on earth as it is in heaven, and goes on blind to the existence of conditions of life which prevent the fulfilment of that prayer. God knows the men who are proffering that devout petition and are at the same time hindering its answer. The way along which God should come is piled high with crowded, unclean tenement houses. That blocked way must be made straight. When all the men and women who have a chance set themselves to minister to their neighbors who have no chance and to reach out helpful and fraternal hands to them, the road will begin to open. When we are all distinctly against whatever degrades our brethren and keeps them from decent and intelligent and Christian living, against dwellings that are unfit for habitation, against hours of labor which leave men no time to live, against avarice and competi-

tion which enslave and starve them,—then we may pray “Thy Kingdom come” with some hope of answer, not before. The Lord will come when we make straight the way.

Thus all our daily life becomes a service done for Him. Whoever carries on an honest business which benefits his fellow-men, and conducts it like a Christian, makes his part of the way straight. All righteous dealing, all gracious and fraternal behavior, all diligent pursuit of duty, all tasks well done, all lessons well learned and truly taught, every word of encouragement, every vote cast on the right side, every day righteously lived, opens that divine highway along which Jesus Christ shall come to take his place at the heart of human life.

INTO THE WAY OF PEACE.

"To guide our feet into the way of peace."—ST. LUKE i. 79.

This is the reason why He came. This is what He came to do. He came to bless us with the benediction of peace.

He found us all astray, wandering in the dark, out of the path, weary and hungry, in distress and danger, as sheep without a shepherd; and He showed us where to go. He Himself went on before us to guide our feet into the way of peace.

It is true that He said once that He did not come to bring peace upon the earth. And He did not, indeed, come to bring a pernicious peace, such as is synonymous with idleness and cowardice. The life that He lived was not a life of peace. Whatever it may have been up to the moment when He began his ministry, thereafter it was filled with contention, occupied with journeyings to and fro, with unending ministry, with teaching and healing, with assaults of enemies. He might have had peace enough had He been willing to let the world go on as it was. He might have lived as se-

renely as his neighbors in the streets of Nazareth, doing his homely tasks, eating and sleeping, without perplexity, without a share in the troubles of his fellows. But that was impossible. He could not do that.

He told his disciples plainly that the world would hate them in their turn, and that they would suffer tribulation. And that came true. The book of the Acts of the Apostles is a record of continual conflict; and after that came the persecutions; and thus the history progressed year by year even unto this present, a long struggle, an unceasing battle with the devil, a round of hard work forever uncompleted. The Christians were very early described as men who aimed to turn the whole world upside down. They were disturbers of the peace. No peace with falsehood, no peace with oppression, no peace with any enemy of God: this was the principle on which they acted.

The peacemaker, in spite of the beatitude, may be the meanest of men. He may preserve a peace which is nothing but selfishness. It may be gained by discreditable compromise, by concession of the truth, by the sacrifice of the right. It may mean that he is afraid; or that he is contented when he ought not to be contented.

It was this pernicious peace of which the Master spoke when He said that He came to bring a sword in the place of it. It is quite another peace into whose blessed path He came to guide our feet.

True peace lies at the end of conflict. It is the reward of victory. It is the attainment of the high purpose for which the battle of peace is fought. When the war is over, when the devil is put to flight, when the wrong is worsted and the evil is reformed, when the Kingdom of God comes, then comes peace with it: the peace which Jesus had at the end of temptations triumphantly resisted, when angels came and ministered to Him.

And it does not wait until the end. It can be carried into the midst of contention. It is like the quiet of the great deep underneath, when the winds blow, and the spray flies, and the waves surge and roar above. It is of the heart. He who has attained the benediction of the peace of God goes on through trouble, grief, difficulty, disappointment, hard tasks and weariness, as the traveler who knows the way presses on through the rough places, over the steep hills, picking his path amidst the rocks and the mire, tired indeed but never losing courage, because he knows where the road goes, knows that every step brings him

so much the nearer to the rest and welcome at the end of it, knows that his feet are in the way of peace.

The other day a man made a journey through the great black African forest, where the pygmies live who fight with poisoned arrows, where there is no path, and the trees are so tall and so thick that it is dark at noon. On he went day after day out of sight of the sun. He never could have done it had he not known that by and by there would be an end of the forest and he would get out into the blessed light. He carried the light in his heart. Every present moment, with its discomforts and darkness and danger, was interpreted by him with reference to that pleasant future toward which his steps were bent when all that he was then enduring would be an interesting and delightful memory. On he went, with cheerfulness and courage, because his feet were in the way of peace.

This is what Jesus meant when He said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you; let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

If we could only know! That is why we are afraid and worry and are perplexed, and our hearts are troubled,—for lack of certainty.

If we could but be sure, absolutely sure, that the hard way along which we stumble is the path of peace: that would make such a difference. If we could know that the sun shines over the black trees, and that in the direction in which we are going there are hills and rivers and the green open country, warm and fair, and that presently we will get out of the persistent shadow, we could so easily be patient. Sometimes it seems as if we were lost. Some people find it hard to believe that there is any light or any peace attainable by them. But suppose that one day the wanderer in the dismal forest sees a friendly face and feels the grasp of a fraternal hand and finds a guide. That has happened thousands of times. Men, thus astray and forlorn, have come into the presence of Jesus Christ; and He has helped them. He has blessed them with the supreme benediction: "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." He has guided their feet into the way of peace.

Sometimes our feet are set in the way of worry.

We are vexed and distressed by the changes and chances of our lives. Everything seems so uncertain. There are the worries of work; and, for some people, there are the worries of

a lack of work. Think of our neighbors who have no money and no prospect of getting any. In a great many cases the apostolic counsel, "be careful for nothing," seems impossible to follow. The apostolic injunction, "Rejoice in the Lord alway," seems but mockery. "And again I say, Rejoice," adds the apostle, as if he felt the need of repetition; but he must say more than that if he would bring any true rejoicing into troubled hearts.

There are the worries of sickness: the pain of it, the interruption and loss of it, the uncertainty of it. Who knows how it will end? The doctor comes, and shakes his head. This dear life, dearer to us than our own, may be taken away. It is a very common experience. It happens every day on almost every street. And before it comes, perhaps years before it comes, we anticipate it, we imagine it to ourselves, shuddering. Peace? How can we have peace in a life where love is attended always by this shadow? Why cry "Peace, peace!" when there is no peace?

What we need is guidance. Either we have wandered from the right road and our anxieties are the result of our journey in the wrong direction; or else we are in the midst of one of the hard places on the divine highway, and may get out by simply going on.

For one of the lessons which Jesus teaches is the lesson of right valuation.

As we come to know Him, and enter into his spirit, and look at life from his point of view, we gradually find out what things are worth. We discover that some things which we have been accustomed to value highly are not worth much. We go along behind the Master, and He guides our feet into the way of peace, and we find that the road is a new road. It runs in quite a new direction. We make our way toward the kingdom of God and his righteousness. It is no wonder that we were full of worry : we were on the wrong path altogether. He only is walking in the path of perfect peace who has learned to be content with that small share of the material blessings of this world which contented Jesus Christ. The ideal life, as He exemplified it, is very simple. It is well to consider in the midst of our anxieties whether or not the things that worry us are worth the worry. Would Jesus Christ have cared ?

Another lesson which he teaches is the lesson of the sure benediction of the righteous.

"All things work together for good to them that love God." So that if we love God it will be right in the end. But we must love God a great deal more than we love our own

comfort and immediate pleasure. The blessing of God is not always given in the shape which seems best to us, does not always appear in the form of temporal success, does not always consist of houses nor lands, nor even of health, nor even of friends. The best blessing of God is his divine commendation. That God is pleased with us, and loves us—nothing is so satisfying as that. Jesus Christ lived a harder life than will fall to the lot of any of us. He knew what poverty meant, and pain and ingratitude and disappointment. He is able to sympathize out of his own experience with the manifold anxieties of men. Yet He walked always in the path of peace. He knew that every difficulty in the way was but another opportunity for increase in spiritual strength and in the favor of God and man. He knew that every trial would prove, when He endured it, a means of divine benediction. So do thousands of others who have followed Him. We have but to go on, trusting in Him, meeting each day's duty as best we can, taking up the daily burden and stumbling along with it over the steep road, and we will come out into the place of peace. There is no doubt about it. Whoever takes his cross and follows Him travels a road which leads straight to everlasting benediction.

Sometimes our feet are set in the way of doubt.

We are involved in intellectual and spiritual perplexity. There are hard questions which we cannot answer. There are problems for which we cannot find solution: the problem of pain, the problem of prayer, the problem of the life to come. The more we study, the greater seems the difficulty. We look about us at the misery of life, at the injustice and cruelty of the world, and see the innocent suffer while the wicked go unpunished, and we ask Does God care? and are afraid of the answer. And we pray, and our prayers seem to be unheard; at least, they are unanswered. And we begin to question if it is worth while to pray. Is it not a foolish utterance into the empty air? Then, upon a black day, death comes into our neighborhood, and a hand is cold that used to touch ours, and a voice is still and a place is empty, and we ask questions of the deaf and dumb sky. Thus we leave the path of peace.

For nothing can give peace in the midst of doubt except assurance which can drive the doubt away. It is imperatively necessary that we have knowledge. We must know. How can we know that God cares, that God both hears and answers prayer, and that after this life is

another wherein those whom we love await us in the presence of God ?

Jesus Christ tells us.

Nothing is more sure than this, that Jesus Christ, in whom the divine and the human meet, knows more about God and more about man than any of us know. The profoundest philosophers have sat at his feet and learned of Him. He is the Spiritual Master. He is the One Who Knows.

There is not a difficulty with regard to the love of God but was present to the mind of Jesus of Nazareth in his own experience. He saw life on its worst side. Yet He taught us to call God our Father, and told us that God cares for each of us. And He was accustomed to pray, and taught his disciples to pray, and declared plainly that God hears every petition that is breathed in the heart of man, and in his love and wisdom, in his own best way—which is not always our way—answers prayer. And He looked on past the gate of death into a land of light, spoke of it often and confidently, and came back after He died that we might be made sure.

If He were but a man like the rest of us, it would still be wise to take his word. No man ever lived who was so fitted as He was to work out these deep problems and

teach the answers. But that is but the beginning of the truth about Him. In Him the Father showed Himself to men. He was God manifest among us, God with us. And what He says is not the academic pronouncement of a philosopher, who partly knows and partly guesses; it is the word of one who speaks out of the heart of truth the sentence of certainty.

When I know what Jesus Christ said I am content. The problem may be as abstruse to me as it ever was; the difficulties may all remain and be as great as ever: I may have no answer of my own. If He has answered, it is enough. He knows. I take his word. Amidst all the guesses, all the questions, all the oppositions and uncertainties and discussions and intricate perplexities, here is sure ground. Here we escape out of our doubt into the light of assurance. We put our hand into the hand of Jesus Christ and He guides our feet into the way of peace.

A CHRISTMAS CONGREGATION.

“And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them.”—ST. LUKE ii. 8, 9.

THEY were the first of all the Christmas congregations. That day an angel preached the sermon, and a choir of angels sang the anthem. And they listened, these simple shepherds, standing amongst their sheep. Nobody else was there.

Many Christmas sermons have been preached since then, but none like that. Year by year we sing the Christmas anthems, but not to that celestial music. Though I believe that the obscurest preacher, setting forth in halting speech the blessed Christmas Gospel, if his heart be filled with holy love for God and man, is as pleasing to the Eternal Father as the angel of the Lord was at the beginning; and the humblest chorus in the smallest church, singing out of time and tune a Christmas hymn with honest gratitude and joy, make a sound as sweet to the ear of God as was ever heard when the morning stars sang together.

So simple was the sermon that the peasant congregation understood it, every word ; yet so profound that we to-day, after all these centuries of prayer and study, have not learned the last of its great meaning. The importunate question which was in the heart of every hearer, the highest and deepest of all questions for them and for us, the longing to be sure of God, the sermon answered and satisfied. The most remarkable quality of the sermon is that it was new. It was a new Christmas sermon. No man can preach that sort of sermon now, unless he preaches to the heathen. I can say nothing which you do not know already. What we need to-day is not information ; we know enough. If knowledge could save us, we would be safe indeed, to all eternity. The trouble is that we do not realize enough. But to that Christmas congregation in the Bethlehem pasture it was all blessedly new. We are just at the end of the year nineteen hundred and such-and-such ; they were just at the beginning of the year one. That very night the Lord of Life was born. There He lay, where the lights of the village shone across the fields. The preaching angel pointed with his hand.

Thus the sermon ended ; and the anthem followed, translating all its truth into great

music, heavenly choirs taking it up, repeating it, glorifying it, turning it into praise and adoration. The anthem was appropriate to the sermon. But the congregation—what shall we say of them? Let us leave the sermon and the anthem to preach and sing their own way into our hearts and take the congregation for our Christmas text. The Christmas congregation—of what sort was it?

It was made up of working people: that is plain. In this respect it was like most of the Christian assemblies of this day. We are all working people. So strong is the tradition of the necessity of honest work, which has come down to us from the industrious lives of our honest forefathers, that persons who have made so much money that they do not need to labor, and are disposed to spend their days simply in enjoying themselves, feel obliged to go abroad. They are ashamed to be seen idle. It is not respectable not to work.

In one matter the shepherds had an advantage over most of us. Theirs was for the most part quiet work. Those were indeed moments of stress and danger. Sometimes the lions came, and sometimes the bears, out of the savage woods, and the shepherds had to fight. They had their share, too, of the common discomforts and monotonies and weariness.

nesses of work. But in the main they had that kind of employment which Matthew Arnold has pictured as the best of blessings,—“toil unsever’d from tranquillity.” They had time to think. There they lay in the sweet grass with the fair sky above them, close to the heart of nature. They were charged with the most ancient and dignified of all human occupations,—next to gardening: they kept sheep, as Abel did of old, and Abraham after him, and David in his ruddy youth on those very Bethlehem hillsides. God speaks to the miller in his mill amidst the dust and noise, and to the engineer beside his clanking, whizzing, deafening engine, and to any man who waits to hear his voice, no matter where he is; but there is something in the peace of the shepherd’s life which especially invites the divine visitation. It must at least be said that worry and hurry do not invite God. In the midst of quietness and confidence He speaks.

Look now a second time at the Christmas congregation. These working men are all poor. Every man of them depends on his day’s wages. Not one of them has ever been to college. They are ignorant folk. The shepherds are mere peasants, persons of no social, nor financial, nor political position what-

soever. We do not know one of their names. Neither did the people who lived in pleasant houses in Bethlehem. They were no better acquainted with them than we are with the men who dig in our streets. Is this a fitting congregation for an angelic sermon and a celestial anthem?

Let us summon the guests at Herod's palace, and bid them look quick out of their windows. Let us arouse the priests in the temple, where the sacrificial fires burn low, and the glimmer of the candles touches the gold of the altar, and the veil hangs close before the Holy Place. Let us assemble an appropriate company, of wise persons, of the privileged, of dignitaries and saints, out of houses wherein culture and wealth have residence, of great folk and mighty, in keeping with this high occasion. This is a cathedral service, and should have a cathedral congregation.

No; the Lord Almighty chooses the congregation, and there are no great people in it. The sky opens, and the angels sing, and the shepherds see and hear. All this splendid pageant is for them.

That is God's way; who plants flowers in the remote deserts and in the crags of the inaccessible mountains,—every flower perfect. Jesus Christ did the works of God in the ways

of God when He preached the sermon on the mount to a company of fishermen and farmers, choosing the congregation as the angel of the Lord chose his. The most important word of his early ministry, the great announcement of his mission and his person,—when and to whom did He declare it? Did He assemble the rulers of the Jews and address them in a court of the temple? Did He summon the Sanhedrin, did He gather together the priests and scribes, and thus in a great voice declare Himself? You remember what He did. He preached that tremendously important sermon to a congregation of one; and that one was a Samaritan, with whom the orthodox had no dealings; and that Samaritan was a woman, in a day when men commonly despised women. It is the Christmas congregation over again.

What does it mean for us? It means two things: it has to do with receiving and with giving.

One of the mysteries of life is the mystery of the distribution of privilege. The doctrine of election, so far as it touches that side of life of which we have actual experience, is one of the truest of all doctrines. Men and women, through neither fault nor merit—as it seems—of theirs, are some of them born into conditions of advantage, others into conditions of disad-

vantage. Some have all the opportunities of enjoyment and of betterment that come into human life. Others seem to have no chance. Some see the glory of the Lord shining round about them ; others are asleep, or blind.

But the Christmas story teaches that temporal privilege and spiritual privilege are not always distributed together. And we know very well which of these is the greater blessing. We know that the soul is infinitely more precious than the body, and that treasure in heaven is immeasurably more worth having than treasure down here. And Christmas comes to correct our ideals. If we have been thinking that wealth or position is the most precious thing in human life, and that we have some ground of complaint against the Father in heaven because He seems to love some of his children better than He loves us, we will do well to go back to this story of the shepherds and the stable.

If the guests who lay warm that night in Herod's palace felt themselves better off than the shepherds who watched in the wintry fields, under the frosty sky, they were mistaken. If the priests in the temple thanked God,—as no doubt they did,—that they were blessed above all the inhabitants of Galilee, they erred greatly. If the fortunate lodgers at the inn

thought themselves privileged beyond the poor folk in the stable, they missed the truth. There was a blessing in the fields under the cold stars, and amongst the cattle in the stalls, which was not known in any house of comfort all the world over.

What an inspiring and encouraging assurance! Every soul of man has its spiritual opportunity. Blessings of God are brought within reach even of the most ignorant, of the obscurest, of the poorest people. They who have no place to lay their head are therein no worse off than He who was cradled in a manger, and who all his life long shared the lot of the poor: and yet was loved, above all who ever lived, by the Father in heaven. It is not every one who can be rich in this world's goods, but there is no one, no matter where he lives, nor who he is, but can be rich in another world's goods.

The Lord is God of the hills, the Syrians said, He is not God of the valleys. A good many other people have thought that. But when the fathers and mothers of our neighborhood buy Christmas gifts, do they not bestow the tenderest thought upon the present for the littlest child? That is the way of the Eternal Father. He is God of the valleys as well as of the hills, of the small as well as of

the great. He knows who dwell in pleasant houses, but He knows also those who lie out under the cold stars.

Thus the Christmas congregation teaches a lesson of receiving. The humble shall receive the blessing; they who are like little children shall see the glory of the Christmas sky and hear the singing of the Christmas angels.

There is also here a lesson of good giving. See what God gave to that small congregation. The best, the very best. For them shone the radiance of heaven, for them the archangel preached the sermon, and the celestial chorus sang the anthem. There was nobody else there.

Here is a physician called to a poor patient. There will be no fee in this case. There will be no reputation to be made out of it. What will he do? If he is one who ministers to his patients in the Christmas spirit, he will give the best of his wisdom, of his patience, of his devotion: the very best, in the Lord's name.

Here is a clergyman in a small town, ministering to a small parish of uneducated and somewhat unresponsive people. How will he conduct himself? If he is a man of God, led by the spirit of God, he will apply himself to that work with all the energy, all the enthu-

siasm, all the sympathy, all the consecration of his being. He will do his best. Others may preach to larger congregations, but none shall preach more fervently, more lovingly than he. That little parish will call out all that is finest and strongest in him.

So it is with the daily task which shall to-morrow lie nearest to the hand of each of us. Let us remember the Christmas congregation in the Bethlehem pasture. Small it was, and insignificant, a group of peasants, yet the blessed angel preached with all the eloquence of heaven, and the blessed angels sang as they were wont to sing before the throne of God. For our example.

THE CHRISTMAS GOODNESS.

"And they came with haste and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger."—ST. LUKE ii. 16.

THUS we learn the lesson of simplicity and of fraternity.

Jesus comes as a little child, born in poverty. Presently He grows up in a country village, working every day with saw and hammer in a carpenter shop. He never owned a house, nor is it likely that He ever had any money beyond what was essential to his immediate needs. The details of his life are not, indeed, set forth for our imitation. We are not following Him by living in his way, any more than we would be like Him by wearing his Oriental dress or by speaking in his Oriental speech. The real thing is to shape our lives according to his spirit; and that was the spirit of entire simplicity.

We are tempted to believe that the over-elaborate life which we live is essential to decent existence. Anything less, we think, would be a step toward a lower plane of living. But the life which Jesus lived for our example was one in which all things material

were reduced to the lowest terms. And it was not only a helpful but a blessed life; it was rich in the most adequate enjoyments; it was as full of genuine happiness as the life of man may be in a world where men have want and sin for next neighbors, and where opportunity and temptation are waiting at every corner of the street.

The initial need to happiness is not many possessions, but much appreciation. The simple life may be the richer for the smallness of its possessions. We may be impoverished by our wealth.

It is necessary, also, in order to get sincere enjoyment out of life, that we be in a measure free from anxiety, and have a little quiet time. And these are conditions which go only with a simple way of living. Many people are so busy laying up treasure on earth and so worried over the hard task of keeping it after it is stored away, that they have no leisure and no mind for the treasure itself. Here is one who owns a single book, and gets more light and help and blessed friendship and counsel out of it than his neighbor whose books are marshalled along a hundred shelves. Here is another with but a single picture, and that but a photograph or print, who sees more in it

than his acquaintances see in all the master-pieces framed in gold which glorify their walls. It is as the Master said, the abundance of a man's life consists not in the abundance of the things which he possesses.

The best wealth, after all, is out of doors, and costs nothing. The poor man, unless he live in a particularly narrow street, may take it when he will. The best pictures are those which live and move, or across which the real clouds drift before the wind. To possess these pictures of the sky or of the street, we have to pay nothing but attention. Life is very rich and beautiful, if we would but open our eyes and ears. The Christmas shepherds, lying in the chill fields, under the stars with their sheep about them, saw heaven's golden gates ajar, and heard celestial harmonies, and so may we.

Some people have an idea that one must live in a good house, and wear good clothes and be well waited upon, and have money in the bank in order to be happy. They may profit by the lesson of the blessed Bethlehem Christmas; the little village, the stable and the manger, the cattle in their stalls; the peasant mother with her husband the carpenter; men coming in out of the fields in their working clothes, bringing their shepherd's staves in their hands; and the December stars shining over all. Life

is here at its simplest. The richest life that was ever lived was lived by one of the poorest of the sons of men.

Thus Christmas teaches the lesson of simplicity; it teaches also the lesson of fraternity.

Jesus Christ, on Christmas day was born; what for? Why did He come? He came that He might live our life, and thus be our example, meeting our manifold temptations, encountering our daily opportunities, entering into our relations, thinking our thoughts, teaching us how to live. Yet one can hardly think of Him as consciously determining with Himself to be our example. The idea is out of accord with his absolute simplicity, and with the beautiful human and fraternal naturalness which He always showed.

Jesus came also that He might manifest the Eternal God, that He might make plain and sure to us the supreme reality of the love of God for the individual, and of the life of man in the world beyond the gate of death. There is no assurance in answer to these deep questions in nature or in philosophy; only dim and unsatisfying guesses, growing pleasantly in the light of the sun and perishing in the stress of the first hard storm. Jesus Christ came to tell us. Yet this, too, is but a partial understanding of Him. He laid great emphasis on truth,

but more on life. Truth, in his teaching and in that of his apostles, is for the sake of life. His example and his doctrine find their fulfilment in the establishment of the kingdom of heaven. He came that He might set up here amongst us a kingdom of heaven.

And what, then, is the kingdom of heaven? It is the ideal social state. It is the application to human life in all its details and in all its relations, of the principles of heaven, so that the will of God shall be done here as it is there. It is that condition of good living in which God's will is loyally and lovingly done. The heart of it is unselfishness, fraternal administration, brotherly love.

When, therefore, the Master says of the rich man that his way into the kingdom of heaven is beset with difficulty, and that he must enter by the camel's gate, He is thinking of the remote distance between the position of one who is trying with conspicuous success to get all that he can out of his fellow-men, and of one who according to the will of God is intent on giving all he can.

When Jesus meets the scholar, the same alternative is in his mind. He tells him at the start that in order to obtain admission into the kingdom of heaven he must undergo a change in the whole attitude and intention of his life.

The only way to express the nature of the change is to liken it to being born again. Nicodemus must be born again. He has been interested in himself, in the enjoyment of his cloistered life, in truth for truth's sake; he must turn about and be interested in his neighbors; he must enter into the fulness of the fraternal life; he must seek truth for life's sake. Only in this manner can he enter into the kingdom of heaven, because that celestial commonwealth is made up of people of that kind, and of no others.

Jesus directed the attention of his disciples to the religious people of that day, to the most eminent representatives of the contemporary church, and told them that unless they were more righteous than these they could not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Because theirs was a selfish righteousness, a culture of religion on the individualistic side, such as made it possible for them to make long prayers in the morning and rob widows' houses in the afternoon. They were unfraternal folk. That is what was the matter with them. They could have no entrance into the republic of humanity, into the coöperative commonwealth, into the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus Christ came, then, on Christmas day, that He might set on foot here in this selfish

world a new brotherhood, a bond of universal fraternity. "Glory to God in the highest" sang the Christmas angels, "and on earth peace, good will toward men."

Jesus intended that that ideal should be realized in the Christian church. For a few weeks at least of every year we take the Christmas lesson of fraternity into our lives. Men and women and little children have been going about thinking what they could do for others. The streets and shops have been full of people whose arms have been full of bundles. There have been sweet domestic conspiracies in every household. The idea has possessed the community that the right thing to do is to make other people happy. For a little while, as the year draws near its close, and we look across into a new time, it seems as if the old manner of living were being put away, with all its narrowness and pettiness and jealousy, with its self-seeking and its vicious self-content, and as if the dawn of the blessed millennium were already shining upon the summits of the mountains.

For a few weeks the Christmas spirit animates the churches. The kingdom of heaven comes. What we want is to have this fraternal time continued. What we need is Christmas every day. If that blessed kingdom is

ever to be established here ; if the will of God is ever to be done by the employer and the workman, by the landlord and the tenant ; if the present discontent is ever to be met and ministered to, it must be by the cultivation in us of the Christmas goodness. We must learn the lessons of simplicity and of fraternity. We must follow more closely the blessed footsteps of his life who as on this day for our salvation was born at Bethlehem, and cradled in a manger.

ON THE EIGHTH DAY.

“And when eight days were accomplished for the circumcising of the child, his name was called Jesus, which was so named of the angel before He was conceived in the womb.”—ST. LUKE ii. 21.

One might well expect that a name given by an angel would be in many syllables and have an uncommon sound. It would be no everyday, familiar name, such as stood already many times upon the pages of the baptismal register of the parish. It would more naturally resemble those high titles by which the angels themselves are known in the Holy Scriptures. At least, it would be selected from the vocabulary of heaven.

It is therefore worth considering, not only that one child who was named by an angel bore the plain name of John, but that even for the Son of God Himself there was chosen at the same bidding a very common name, indeed. The name Jesus was called a hundred times a day in every Jewish neighborhood. It stood upon the rolls of all the schools. In most groups of children in the street there was a boy answering to it. It came as is not unfrequently the case to-day, from a famous

soldier. Jesus is the same name as Joshua, being nothing other than Joshua pronounced Greek-fashion.

We speak it with an instinctive reverence. It is no longer borne of any of our neighbors. And we think of the spiritual meaning of it, and how it befitted Him who came to fight against our common enemy and to save us from our sins. But the fact remains that the name which was chosen by the angel was but a humble, common name. It was not out of place amidst the rude and scanty furniture of the home at Nazareth. It had no strange, aristocratic and unbecoming sound in Joseph's carpenter shop. It went well with a hammer and a blouse. It was a good name for Him who came not only to take our nature upon Him, and to be one of us in the completest sense, but to make Himself acquainted with poverty and to share in all our hardships.

I have especially in mind, however, not the name, but the circumstances under which it was given; and even here I will ask you to consider not that ancient rite, with which for these many centuries we have had only an antiquarian concern, but rather the fact that that rite was carefully observed. The name was given at the circumcision of Jesus, eight days after his birth. It was the custom of the

church, and Joseph and Mary devoutly followed it.

It thus appears that when God sent his Son into the world that He might take up human life at the beginning, He chose that He should be nurtured in a religious family, where He would be surrounded by the influences which belong not only to the spiritual, but also to the institutional side of religion. He chose a family who had the habit of attending church with regularity, as a matter of both conscience and of principle, where the father and the mother alike were church members, and in good earnest about it.

It was a time when impatience of ecclesiastical restraint might seem to have been commendable. The church of that day was given over body and soul into the bonds of formalism. It was tied fast. It was pinned down on all sides by a thousand threads. Ritual had apparently taken the place of religion. It was impossible for a really enlightened spiritual person to approve of it. And Jesus was compelled, as everybody knows, to make his disapproval plain. It could not be said of some of its leading men that they were even honest ritualists. They fasted with exactness, and were good about giving money to the church and to the charities of the time,

and accounted themselves to possess more of the favor of God than anybody else on earth; but their long prayers did not prevent them from robbing widows' houses.

Jesus confronted them in the market-place, and called them by a hard name, which they deserved. Other men must have been acquainted with them, also. The people who did business with them must have known them very well. A hypocrite may deceive himself, but he will not long deceive his customers.

It was a good time, one might think, for a sincerely religious man or woman to give up the church. Looking back afterward, from the life of Jesus to his birth, seeing in how outspoken a fashion He preached spiritual religion, and started a revolution, which has gone on ever since, putting the deed above the creed, and love above everything else, opening the eyes of the blind, setting slaves free, and turning tyrants out of their palace doors, one might have expected some other beginning than this act of conventional obedience.

One might imagine quite another choice of parents, and have looked to see Him come where the father and mother, weary of the whole bad business, had abandoned the temple and the synagogue, and were saying their prayers in their own way, looking up into the

clear sky. Instead of that, He is given to the care of Joseph and Mary, who go up to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the Passover, who have their child duly circumcised upon the rubrical day, and who, when He is for the first time carried out of doors, take Him to the temple, and put Him, as the custom was, into the priest's arms.

What is it which keeps people nowadays away from institutional Christianity? What shall we say of the families who drift about from church to church, belonging nowhere, going in pursuit of a sermon or an anthem, or staying at home to read? What is the matter with the men whose wives and children represent the family at church? There are reputable and cultivated gentlemen, whose names are recorded with honor in the public prints, and with credit in the books of the banks, who have come into a condition where they are not even good pagans. Religion, whose "everlasting reality" the foremost philosopher of this country has lately discussed with the ardor of a prophet, seems to have no meaning in their lives. What is the matter?

There is nothing in the example of the ideal man to warrant this. Strong as He was in his preaching of a spiritual religion, He never decried institutions, never separated from the

established conditions, nor taught others so, never of his own will broke with the church in which He was brought up. They put Him out; He could not help that. But he taught always that even the imperfect past must be made to grow into the better future, and that not destruction but fulfilment is the right law of life.

Some of these men speak true when they say that they have no interest in religion. Napoleon, during his campaign in Egypt, did not visit Jerusalem, because it did not lie, he said, within the scope of his operations.

There are people who are so busy and interested in other things that religion is left out. Some of them are given over to the urgent energies of business. They go, like the men in the parable, to their merchandise. They are occupied seven days a week with the market or the mill. Others are engaged with their professions or their books. Sunday is spent pleasantly in resting or in reading. They are not in opposition to religion, any more than the unmusical man is in opposition to music. They simply do not care about it. Others still are contented with their own homes and with the hospitable houses of their friends, and are not attracted toward the church. It is but a dull place, excellently

adapted to the dull folk who go to it. In the meantime, with body and mind nurtured and cultured, the soul is starved. Life is lived along its lower levels. The blindest see that, some day. For even the busiest must die.

Other men do not dare to go to church. They stay away for very shame. They know what miserable things are hidden behind the fair curtain of their polite behavior; they know what they are doing in the dark. And the one bit of good honesty which they have saved out of the general moral wreck forbids them out of mere decency to kneel in pretended prayer in the house of God. They smile over their neglect of religion, and make evasive answers, feigning weariness or unbelief, but they are well aware that if their lives were opened to the daylight they would not be wanted in the church, except in honest penitence.

And others stay away because they are individualists. They propose to do their own thinking, and they have read somewhere that the church forbids that. Or they are not satisfied with the services. They are too cultured to go to church. The music troubles them, the sermon offends their literary taste, and there are people in the congregation whom they do not know. Or they really

feel that at home in their own fashion they can get closer to God than they can at church.

Fortunately the whole trend of life to-day is against this position. Individualism is true, and must be maintained. † Every soul of us must stand solitary before God, and give answer without attorney for his individual life. (We do so stand every day we live.

But the social and fraternal side of life is true also, and of even more importance. We belong each to the other. No man liveth unto himself. No man stands apart from religion, unto himself. Every man needs his brother, and is needed. The great influences which determine the currents of our present life are all in this direction. The emphasis to-day is no longer on the individual, but on society. People who are exclusively intent upon the living of their own life and the saving of their own soul are no longer considered laudable citizens. There was a day when they were generally revered, when men fancied they saw the halos of heaven glowing about their heads. But that is happily gone by.

The saint to-day is the devout soul who goes about the common streets, busy in the common tasks, sharing the common life as Jesus did, but doing good as He did, and full of the spirit of ministry. The problems which

at present engage the attention of earnest people are social problems. We must abate some of our prejudices, and do violence to some of our oversensitive tastes, and be ready to make concessions and allowances, in order that we may take part with others in the work of the great world. Certain it is, that the hard problems which press upon the conscience of this generation will never be solved by individuals, rather by institutions into which individuals have brought their strength, their energy and their enthusiasm, that by united action something may be done.

The individualist is out of date. Selfishness has ceased to be in fashion. Everybody belongs to some society. More and more, that tends toward a realization of the meaning and the purpose of the Christian church. More and more it is coming to be seen that men and women of a religious spirit, who are on the side of righteousness and truth, who want the kingdom of God to come, and to come soon, are out of place outside the church. And church attendance is felt to be a social service which is due from every honest man to himself, to his neighbor and to society.

It was by no mere chance that Jesus Christ was born in a church-going family, and in the midst of the institutions of religion. His was

the ideal childhood, as his life was the ideal life. To be born of parents who serve God, to be nurtured in the creed and the character taught by the Christian church, to begin life with the consecration and the blessing of baptism, and to go on growing in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, to be acquainted with the privilege of prayer, to know the uses of Sunday, and year by year to enter more and more into the enjoyment and the strength of all devotional and sacramental opportunities—it is the right of the child.

Anything less starves and defrauds the child. Wherever it is lacking, there, rather than in the slums, is the real poverty. Upon it depends the future not only of the church, but of the nation.

THE WISE MEN'S GIFTS.

"And when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto Him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh."—*ST. MATT. ii. 11.*

THESE men were Gentiles: they came out of the great world, and represented the race.

Until the hour of their arrival, Jesus had been identified with the Jews. He was born of Jewish parents in a village of the Jews; He was heralded by a celestial chorus which sang an anthem in Hebrew to a congregation of Hebrew shepherds; by the rite of circumcision, He was made a member of the Jewish church. His life, thus far, had been a Jewish life. And the Jews lived in the narrowest of countries, bounded by a river and a mountain and a desert and a sea, and had a religion like their geography. It reached to heaven, like the blue heights over their heads; but it looked only a brief space, this way and that, on earth. The Jews thought that God cared more for Judea than for all other populated places of the planet put together. They believed that He was particularly, if not exclusively, interested in their welfare. They were reasonably

sure that the heathen would fall into perdition; and they were not sorry.

But now came these pilgrims from the East, men of other speech and dress and creed, and the wall fell down on that side to let them in; and the little company gathered about the holy child got a sudden glimpse of the wide world. By and by, the Greeks came, pilgrims from the West, at the end of his life as the Orientals came at the beginning, and the wall fell down on that side.

It took the disciples a long time to get the truth into their minds that the religion of Jesus Christ is an inclusive, universal religion, in which the chief thought is not how to keep men out, but how to bring them in. But here, beside the cradle of the Saviour, that great truth is symbolized. Into the presence of the Christ came these eastern strangers, and behind them follows an innumerable company, all Europe and America, ourselves amongst the others.

Of less importance, but of no less living interest, is the fact that these significant travelers are represented as men possessed of wisdom and of wealth. They are wise men, bringing gifts. Thus another contrast, full of meaning, is suggested. The first who came to pay their reverence to the King in the manger were shepherds, fresh from the pastures of Beth-

lehem, poor men and probably but ill-provided with education. It looked then, and afterward, as if the Messiah were chiefly interested in people oppressed by poverty and ignorance. His chosen disciples were men who had no money. At the beginning of his first sermon He declared that He came to preach the gospel to the poor. They who followed Him were mostly peasants. It was the common people, we are told, who heard Him gladly. He and his first ministers spoke hard words against the rich, and declared that for a man to have treasure in this world and in the next world too, was almost on the other side of the limits of possibility. The New Testament, if it were read according to its plain meaning, would be seen to be curiously out of place in "kings' houses."

But here come the Epiphany pilgrims, with their gold and frankincense and myrrh, and again there is a widening out of the boundaries of the gospel. Wealth and wisdom come with them into the presence and allegiance of Jesus. Jesus Christ came to bless the rich and the cultured as well as to benefit the poor. The distinctions which we make amongst men meant absolutely nothing to Him. He loved no man for his poverty. There was an idea in the Middle Ages, in the mind of St. Francis and

of his closest followers, that poverty is of itself a virtue. But that was a reaction from the selfish temper of a luxurious and indulgent time: there is no abiding truth in it. The divine sympathy of Jesus went out, indeed, to the poor, because He saw that they were oppressed and miserable. He had a necessary word of reprobation for any man, rich or poor, whom He saw behaving selfishly and turning his back upon his fraternal opportunities; and He found more of that among the rich than He did among the poor. But He valued men always and exactly for what they were. The manner of their dress did not enter into the account. Character weighed with Him. A man's credit at the bank went for nothing. The fine people who lived to be waited upon He put in the background always. To Him, they were the "lower classes." He preferred the people who were busy serving.

The notion that wealth and culture have no place in the Christian religion is one which has often been maintained by mistaken persons; but the truth which lies at the heart of it, and the only truth there is in it, is that selfishness is unchristian. Nothing else, indeed, is quite so distinctly unchristian. And the rich man who is making his money by the disadvantage of his brother; whose gain is got by the pay-

ment of such a wage and the demanding of such a day that the men who work for him are compelled to a merely animal existence, and who is thereby damaging the community and defying the Father in heaven; such a rich man has no place in the kingdom of God—that is plain enough.

And the cultured people who are reserving their culture for their own sweet satisfaction, shutting it up in their pleasant houses, delighting in it in the midst of their books and pictures, and keeping carefully out of the company of the uncultured, are pagan, rather than Christian. They who share what they have with those who have not, are the only Christians. Nobody whom God has made a steward of his blessings, who is not somehow dispensing the blessings which have thus been given him in trust is a true follower of Jesus Christ. All the prayers and sacraments in Christendom will not advance such an one beyond the standard of the cultured scribes of our Lord's day, concerning whom He said to his disciples, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of 'such as these,' ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven."

We make a great mistake if we think that God has given us advantages and privileges

and wealth and education because He has a special favor unto us, and loves us particularly. He does not mean these just for us. It is his way in this world to do his blessed work by the hands of men. Privilege is but a sign that He has chosen us privileged people as his special agents. God looks upon us, and He sees how a great many, as things go, are unlearned and unhappy; and amidst these unprivileged people He chooses out a few whom He educates and trains them into refinement, sends them to college and to Europe, and thus enables them to go amongst their brethren and help them and uplift them and make them happier and bless them. That is what we are for.

Thus the wise men came, men of our own kind, Gentiles and privileged persons. They brought gifts. They opened their treasures and presented gold and frankincense and myrrh.

These gifts, except perhaps the gold, were of no use. Even the gold, unless it were in the form of money, would but perplex the carpenter and his wife. What could they do, these plain people, far from home, hurrying about from place to place, into Egypt and back again—what could they do with myrrh and frankincense? The gifts had no commercial

value. Mary came presently to present the Holy Child in the temple, and her offering was that of the poorest people. She had not been enriched by the wise men's gifts. In the provision for the common needs of life, they had no use.

Thus it is that they have been interpreted as symbols. They seem to have signified something which could not have been weighed or measured in a shop, or itemized in a bill.

They may have been a symbol of Him to whom they were given. They may have expressed the wise men's thought of Him. That is the tradition. The gold was the token of sovereignty, and was brought because the Holy Child was to reign as a king; the myrrh, which was an herb used in embalming, was the token of mortality, and was given to Him as to one who must meet the common human destiny of death, and prophesied that day when upon the cross wine should be offered Him "mingled with myrrh"; and the frankincense, which was burned on altars for its sweet savor, and its smoke the symbol of ascending prayers, was the token of divinity, the fit gift for Him who was the manifestation of the Most High God. So the mediæval preacher would have said.

Or the gift may have been a symbol of the

land from which the wise men came. They may have brought them as travelers bring to strange lands the characteristic products of their own country, or as an embassy might bring a tribute. They were the best things they had. They looked about, as they started on their journey, to find the gifts which might best typify their place and nation and they found these. They were their best.

Our best—it is not myrrh nor frankincense—what is it? The very best we have, the characteristic products of our life? It is the author's book, the composer's music, the artist's picture, the mother's children, the merchant's money, the lawyer's brief, the scholar's lesson; it is the machine of the inventor, the policy of the politician, the ideal of the reformer, it is such ability, such grace, such privilege as God has given us. The Epiphany pilgrims teach us what to do with it. We will offer it to Him. We will consecrate it to his service. We will use it in his name, and not for our own sake—for his sake—this new year. If we have been hoarding it up in the East, in the land of dreams and indolence and speculations and beautiful visions and good intentions, we will rise up and take it in our hands, and carry it along the wise men's road that we may bring it into the Master's presence. Is it education

above our brethren, or social grace, or position, or influence, or energy or time : whatever ability or opportunity it is, we will make a Christian use of it this year. We will somehow employ it for the happiness and benefit of those brethren of ours and his who have not the privileges which we enjoy, but whom He accounts to be the same even as Himself.

Or the gifts may have been a symbol not only of Him to whom they were given, and of the land from which they came, but of the spirit of the givers.

They meant that the wise men had the spirit of giving. They wanted to give something. They were not willing to come with empty hands into the presence of the King. It is plain that these men were in earnest. They were not curious travelers in search of marvels ; they were not men of science intent on verifying an hypothesis. They saw the star in the east, and they came to worship Him whom the star betokened. They were personally interested. And that personal interest appeared, as it must forever appear in the desire to be of service. It is by this that we may test the strength of our convictions. What do they make us do ? What do they demand and get from us ?

The gifts were also a sign of the wise men's

courtesy ; they meant homage and reverence and allegiance. Thus they were like the gifts that are given at Christmas, whose best value is not in the costliness or usefulness of what is given, but in the regard and remembrance and affection of the giver. They were like the gifts that are given to adorn the church, gifts of gold, of silver or of brass, of carved wood or needlework, not essential to the work of the church or to the conduct of the service, not—in the ordinary meaning of the word—“useful,” not at all the sort of gift which is conveyed in a check made payable to the treasurer of the parish and intended to defray expenses, but given to make the house of God more beautiful because it is the palace which is consecrated to Him whom we love. The wise men’s gifts were gifts of sentiment, of imagination, of poetry, not of utility.

That Jesus prized such gifts is made plain afterward in the case of her who broke the alabaster box of ointment, and thereby offended the mercantile instincts of some of the disciples. They estimated that it was worth three hundred pence, and that it might have been exchanged for a great number of loaves of bread and coats and shoes and given to the poor. But to Him, it had a value beyond all calculation, because He considered the love

with which it was given. There was a personal element in it. It was for Him. It is well to do things that are for the good of the community and for the benefit of the poor, but we need to add to them the wise men's gifts—the gifts that have no social value, but are altogether personal. A kitchen stove is an essential article in the household, but it would not be a fitting Christmas present: a book, a picture, a bit of gold, would have a different meaning. There would be something personal about them. They would be symbols, like the wise men's gifts.

In any case, the value of the gift is not in the material but in the meaning. God looks not at the hand but at the heart. It is our thoughtfulness for Him, our reverence, our love that counts. The wise men brought not only their gifts but their own selves, and what they gave was interpreted by their bended knees and their bowed heads and the love in their eyes.

And they were Gentiles, as we are. They were privileged persons, like ourselves.

JESUS IN SUBJECTION.

“And was subject unto them.”—ST. LUKE ii. 51.

THE story stops there, and does not begin again until eighteen years after. Jesus is left in Nazareth, a lad of twelve; when He next appears, it is in the maturity of manhood.

We are told, indeed, that his mother kept his sayings and pondered them in her heart; He was tenderly, wisely and reverently cared for: we know that. We are told also that He “increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man”; thus He responded to this gentle ministration, growing up in the only atmosphere in which human beings can grow aright, the atmosphere of domestic love. He went to school and learned his lessons. He did his daily tasks. He became taller and stronger, year by year. People liked Him; He had the approbation of the neighborhood. And He had the favor of God. Thus passed his life for eighteen years. Once, it is true, He made a journey into the great world and met with a remarkable experience, but He went back the next day with Mary and Joseph to Nazareth and was subject unto them. Here

the first chapter ends, and there is no second chapter, nor third; the next chapter is the fourth or fifth, after blank pages.

The sky blazes at his birth; the angels sing anthems of jubilation, announcing that He has come to save the world; the stars in their courses declare his glory, and mysterious great persons come from the remote East saying that they would behold the King. When He is presented in the temple, the saints praise God for the sight of Him. By and by, when He goes again, the wise and venerable are astonished at his understanding and answers. Then what happens? What is the next event in this wonderful life? Back He goes to the little narrow country town of his childhood, to the home of his simple parents, to a round of small economies, to a carpenter's shop; and stays there.

What an anti-climax! We know it all so familiarly that we are accustomed to take it easily for granted, without thinking much about it; we need to look attentively at it if we would see it as it is. This great beginning, this celestial preparation, this prologue sung by choirs from heaven,—to what does it lead? To a carpenter's bench in the back street of a country town; to nothing at all. Mary and Joseph look at Him as He works and plays,

faithful, obedient, gentle, capable, a good son and brother, but in no way wonderful, going day by day between the breakfast-table and the shop, and the series of marvels with which this life began must seem to have been only the incidents of a dream. They could not understand it. There were five brothers of them: James and Joses and Juda and Simon and Jesus. The neighbors made no difference between them. They worked at the same bench, they studied in the same school, they sat together in the synagogue, they ate at the same table, they lived their life in common, like any other brothers—Jesus attracted no unusual attention. This, it seems to me, is plain from the fact that when He finally came out and entered upon his mission He found no condition of expectancy. Nobody was anticipating great things of Him. His four brothers did not credit his claims for a moment; they were agreed in their disbelief. And as for his neighbors, the friends of his parents, his teachers, the people in whose houses He had plied his trade, the associates of his youth, you remember what they did when He preached his new doctrine in their synagogue: they tried to kill Him. This day, He said, is this old scripture fulfilled in your ears. And for a moment they listened in amazement;

then they set upon Him in the church, dragged Him out of doors, and purposed to throw Him over the nearest cliff. It is evident that his quiet life among them had not prepared them to believe great things of Him. The sky which once had flamed over his head was now the same for Him as for another, blue or grey by day, and black by night, with no stars except the everlasting and unchangeable ones. The trumpets sound, the music of the king's march fills the air, the procession of majesty and victory advances, and we look eagerly along the road to see the splendor, and behold here is only a carpenter's lad coming, with garments worn and stained with toil, and with an ax over his shoulder.

The contrast is made more striking still when we consider the circumstances of the visit which Jesus paid to Jerusalem when He was twelve years old. He had been revealed to shepherds and scholars, to poor and rich, to Jews and Gentiles; there was one person, however, to whom He was not yet known, but to whom it was initially important that He should be known. That person was Himself. There He lay in his mother's arms when the angels sang, and when the wise men came, knowing no more about the wonders going on beside Him than any little child could know.

And year after year He had grown up, taking life as He found it, Himself included in it, without introspection. The time had not come for Him to look naturally into his own heart. He had not begun to ask Himself questions about Himself.

But now He is twelve years of age, and much more mature than a lad of the same span of life would be in our colder latitude where all things grow more slowly. He is taken to Jerusalem. For the first time, He sees a city. His being wakes. Great new thoughts crowd upon his soul. Then in the temple, in the midst of scenes made holy by manifold associations, by benedictions from on high, in the presence of wise men and ministers of God with whom He speaks, suddenly He catches a glimpse of a great, a tremendous future. He, too, shall teach; He, too, shall declare the will and truth of God to men. Yes, and beyond that—this coming one of whom the holy man of the ancient scriptures wrote, whose name of mystery is on all lips, whose advent is awaited by the nation and by the race, the Deliverer of the people, the Saviour of the world, the Son of God: who is he? "Is it not I myself?" questions the child.

This, I think, was that great business of the

Father which so filled the mind and soul of Jesus that every other thought, of his home, of his family, of his errand in the city, was driven out. He could not think of anything else. Afterward, when the great truth grew clear and unmistakable, and it was perfectly plain that He was indeed the Christ, you know how He went away into the wilderness and so forgot all other interests of life in this absorbing contemplation that for days and days He did not remember even to eat. So it was here. For the moment He forgot that He had any father and mother. The supreme idea had taken entire possession of Him.

Do you not know it? He says with perplexity and amazement to Joseph and Mary when they come sorrowfully seeking Him and gently rebuking Him. Do ye not know that I must be about my Father's business? It shines so clear in his soul that it seems to Him that it must be evident to them. The great future, the sublime mission, the absorbing anticipation, possess Him. This is the chief epiphany: this is the supreme manifestation of Christ. He is made manifest to Himself. But they perceived nothing. They understood not the saying which He spake unto them.

Then what happened? "He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was

subject to them." Thus He lived for eighteen years. Back He went to the narrow life of the poor little town, to his daily work with saw and hammer, to his association with the village boys who lived next door and across the street, to the synagogue school, to the house of the carpenter and his wife, whom thereafter He obeyed, asking no questions and making no complaints, being in subjection to them. He who had said to Himself in that splendid moment, "I am He that shall deliver Israel," here He is as if that moment had never flashed upon his life, as if that future had never entered into his soul. He who had declared Himself called from on high to do great things for God, his "Father's business,"—what is his Father's business? It is to hew a beam to a straight line, to make a door that will not warp, and to run errands for a carpenter.

What does it all mean?

It means, in the first place, that the best life, the life which we ought to take for our example, was lived in the light of a great ideal. Jesus of Nazareth, of whom men said, "Is not this the carpenter's son?" made up his mind when He was but twelve years old that He would be great. In a company, composed as this is of so many young people who are looking out into the future at the beginning of this

new year as Jesus looked into his own future that day in Jerusalem, this is a fact worth thinking about. He resolved to be great.

"A spirit of zealous but friendly emulation arose amongst us," says Baron Bunsen, describing an incident in his own experience, "and on a certain cheerful evening, at my suggestion, we made a vow, each to each other and to all, that we would effect something great in our lives."

George Herbert begins his description of the Country Parson in a like spirit. "Being desirous," he says, "(through the mercy of God) to please Him, for whom I am and live, and who giveth me my desires and performances, and considering with myself that the way to please Him is to feed my flock diligently and faithfully, since our Saviour hath made that the argument of a pastor's love, I have resolved to set down the form and character of a true pastor, that I may have a mark to aim at: which also I will set as high as I can, since he shoots higher that threatens the moon, than he that aims at a tree."

It was said the other day in comment upon a brilliant professor in the university that everything that he did was cleverly done but that his life lacked background: there seemed to be no lofty controlling purpose behind his

works; he had no *magnum opus* in prospect for which he was preparing slowly by preliminary studies. He had not determined to be great.

One of the most inspiriting and blessed sights of human life is that of the youth who has a fine ideal, who knows what he wants to be, and rejoices that it is a worthy ambition, and has made up his mind to bend all his interests that way. We shake our heads and say behind his back that he will never get to the goal of his high hopes. Perhaps he never will. But he will be the better man for having the high hopes. And if we have abandoned our ambitions without putting higher and better ones in the place of them, so much the worse for us. Old and young, we ought to look into the new year with anticipation and resolution. We ought to make up our minds to be worthily great. God wants young men to see visions, and old men to dream dreams. God wants us to make much of ourselves, all that we can.

How? How shall we do that?

By following his example who went down with his parents to Nazareth and was subject unto them. He never forgot the high resolve of his boyhood. That sight of the future never grew dim in his mind; rather it grew stronger

and clearer as the years passed. By and by, when John the Baptist came preaching his new message, and declaring that the Messiah was even then dwelling unknown amongst men, Jesus came forward and began his Messianic work. It was the natural next step in his life. There it was always in his thoughts, always in his prayers and plans. But He waited till the time came. He spent the long space of eighteen years in simple, quiet preparation.

The preparation consisted in the faithful, obedient, cheerful, enthusiastic doing of the nearest duty. Presently He might do great things, but now He must do small things. Thus shall He be ready when the great occasions come. The town was very small, especially after that glimpse of the great world; the people who lived in it were not altogether congenial, not much interested in the things that interested Him; carpenter work was but a dull and heavy task for one who felt within Him the stirring of an eloquence which should bring multitudes to his feet. Was He not too good for it all? Ought He not to go away where He could live a larger life?

It is the temptation which accompanies a high ideal. He who has made up his mind to be great, would be great at once. He reads

the poets, and the life which surrounds him seems commonplace and prosaic; he thinks long thoughts and his home seems unattractive. One of the commonest instances is that of the young woman who goes back to the Nazareth of her country home after the life of some academic Jerusalem where she has conversed with learned persons, and accustomed herself to the ways of cultured society, and lived in the serene air of delightful studies. The country village will seem unendurable to her, unless she learns the lesson which is taught in the record of our Lord's subjection.

See what Jesus does. He returns to precisely these same conditions, under very similar circumstances, and He takes life as it is. He will be great, but He will first serve his apprenticeship. Greatness is not only the achievement of a great deed; that is but a part, and not the essential part, of it. The heart of greatness is the quality of character which itself constitutes greatness. One of the elements of this character is patience—willingness to wait; another element is obedience—willingness to serve. Men must wait and they must serve before they can go forward wisely and command triumphantly. The supreme occasions of our time have brought into the opportunity of great deeds men of whose existence most

people were ignorant. Year after year they had gone on, doing homely tasks, meeting the nearest duty and rarely finding it very dramatic, learning to be patient, learning to be obedient. It must have seemed sometimes to them as if the visions of their youth were doomed to disappointment. They must sometimes have looked about upon their somewhat narrow lives, upon the routine of their days, and asked themselves if it were actually worth while. Then the moment came, and these men met it splendidly. Year by year they had been building up a quality of greatness which made great achievement natural. After their eighteen years of silence, the men spoke and were heard.

It is the benediction of the parable of the pounds and of the talents. They who had been good stewards of the small matters put in their trust, are made rulers of cities. They have been faithful in that which is least: and have thereby prepared themselves to be faithful in that which is most.

The year begins; and all its pages are as blank as the silent years of the life of Jesus Christ. Let us begin it with high resolution; then let us take all its limitations, all its hindrances, its pretense, its disappointments, its narrow and commonplace conditions, and meet

them as the Master did in Nazareth, with patience, with obedience, putting ourselves in cheerful subjection, serving our apprenticeship. Who knows what opportunity may come to us this year? Let us live in a great spirit, then we shall be ready for a great occasion.

THE FAITH AND THE SAINTS.

"Ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."—ST. JUDE 3.

DELIVERED once for all. That is what the word means. It denotes an act which need not be repeated. Thus it is said in another place, in contrast with the sacrifices which the high priest offered every year, Christ was "once" offered. That one offering sufficed. And this one deliverance of the faith, St. Jude would teach us, is sufficient. The true word has been spoken. Any other word must be compared with this, and be approved only in proportion to its agreement with this authoritative and final utterance.

The Christian preacher was very sure of his sermon in those days. St. Paul was so absolutely certain that he was teaching the whole doctrine of God that he did not hesitate to say that if even an angel from heaven should preach any other gospel he would thereby be proved to be not only a mistaken and heretical, but even an accursed angel. There was no doubt about it. The light that shone from heaven illuminated the mind of Paul so that

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there was not a shadow in it. "I know," he says, again and again. He did not guess; he did not argue cautiously from the known to the unknown; he did not read a shelf of books on this side of the question and another shelf of books on the other side, and add up two columns of resulting figures and thus come to a conclusion which he might tentatively hold until another book should make a change in his position.

No man ever lived who was more sure of anything than St. Paul was of every article of his belief. That was what gave him his influence. He went about among people who were perplexed and puzzled, asking questions and getting no answers, not knowing what to think; and he spoke in a good, loud voice, so that everybody could hear, and in plain words, which the simplest could understand, taught men without hesitation, without reservation, promptly, definitely and with unqualified assurance, as Moses might have preached when he came down Sinai hill, having talked with God.

St. Jude has the same confidence. The faith, he says, has already been delivered to the saints. We have the truth. He is aware, indeed, that this truth is questioned, that some bold folk even deny it, preaching sermons

quite different from Jude's. But his sense of certainty is not disturbed. He fears lest some of his congregation may be unsettled, and writes this letter to confirm their faith; but his faith falters not. Bold he stands, like a shepherd by his flock when the wolves howl in the neighborhood, shouting defiance. Un-godly men! he cries, brute beasts, clouds without water, trees without fruit, raging waves of the sea foaming out their own shame, wandering stars to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever. They are the fallen angels, degenerated into devils, chained in the black pit till the horrors of the day of judgment.

This is controversial language, and is not to be commended as an example for a Christian sermon. The writer is earnestly contending for the faith which was once delivered to the saints in a manner which has had much following in tracts and pamphlets, and pulpits and religious newspapers, from that day to this. He is perhaps doing it in the most effective fashion for his purpose with the people for whom he was concerned. He knew his congregation. And he may have known the heretics against whom he wrote. We know, or ought to know, in these days that people who differ from us, even with differences remote and serious, even denying that which we hold to be the faith,

are more likely to be mistaken than malicious ; and, in any case, are not to be either persuaded or defeated by mere hurling of abusive names.

Regarding St. Jude's earnestness, however, there can be no question. He halted not between opinions. He was thoroughly satisfied in his own mind. He knew what he believed and had no doubts about it. He was as sure of it as he was of his own being. St. Paul and St. Jude represent the attitude of the other Christian teachers of their time. All things were against them. The influential people of the towns in which they preached gave them scant and disrespectful hearing ; the religious leaders of the time were in opposition, having no faith in their new gospel ; to the philosophers and the book-writers the whole movement seemed not even of enough consequence to be amusing. Public opinion—that dread, mysterious, terrifying adversary—was stout against them. In these timid days, when a review article frightens us out of our faith, and a popular novel makes us afraid for the foundation of our religion, and when even the orthodox fall into dismay at the remote imagination of heresy and feel that the whole church is descending precipitately into the Great Bad, we may well applaud the robust

faith of that earlier time when no attack, no argument, no majority of unbelief and opposition, stirred from their sure confidence the men and women who had put their faith in the gospel and the living God.

What makes this difference? How comes it that we seem less secure than they were? What is it which causes this lamentable change in the tone of Christian preaching? Several reasons might no doubt be given, but one reason I wish especially to offer and to emphasize. The faith which those stanch believers heed and preached was a simpler faith than ours. It was like the creed of the blind man whose eyes Jesus had opened: "This one thing I know." The scribes and Pharisees plied him with hard questions and he had no theological answers, he was no match for them in scholastic argument. But that did not for an instant disconcert him. How this and that may be, he says, I know not. This one thing I know, that whereas I was blind now I see. St. Paul goes out upon his mission intent upon essentials. He refuses to be distracted from his supreme purpose. He tells us that he definitely resolved to preach nothing save Jesus Christ and Him crucified. That Jesus Christ had come from God and gone back to God, opening the blessed heavens, and that He had died

to save us from our sins, this one thing he knew.

The faith which was so strongly held in that early time was the faith which was once delivered to the saints. That is a somewhat different thing from the faith as it was afterward delivered by the theologians. It may be that our departing from the fine serenity of the fathers is due to some confusion, which they happily knew not, as to the actual contents of the faith.

The faith, as it is recounted by the writers of the New Testament, seems to have been but a brief statement of a few essential facts without much explanation. Thus St. Paul writes to the Corinthians, using expressions which remind us of the epistle of St. Jude: "I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures." That, he says, is his gospel which he preached, which they had received, and by which also they are saved. A brief gospel differing much from other and later statements of belief.

And this is the nearest approach to a formal, consecutive creed which St. Paul makes in any of his writings. Christian preaching, if we are

to judge of it by the gospels, was chiefly a statement of the great facts of the life and death of Jesus Christ—of his death, especially. Men were taught that He was the Son of God, that He was God Himself made manifest among us; that He became man for our example and died for our salvation, and rose again for our assurance and ascended into heaven. That was the beginning and the end of the faith which was delivered to the saints.

They did not claim to understand it adequately. St. Paul counted among the joys of the life to come a better knowledge of the resurrection of Christ. These great facts were the manifestations of divine mysteries which passed all understanding. They meditated upon them. Some of them wrote down their meditations. St. Paul in his epistles dwelt at length upon the mystery of the atonement, pondering it, applying it, drawing out its blessed meanings. Whoever is in doubt as to the reality of the inspiration, and questions if there is a vital difference between the Bible men and other gifted men, may profitably compare the comments of St. Paul upon this fact of the atonement with the reasonings and conclusions of the school men and divines who have followed him.

Presently the observations of the fathers

upon the faith of the saints came to be added to that faith, so that men were now urged to earnestly contend not only for the brief and essential gospel, but for the interpretations, true and false together, which had been put upon the gospel. The Christian must believe not only St. John and St. Paul, but also St. Athanasius and St. Augustine. Some of these comments upon the faith corresponded to the conclusions of a similar process which had gone on among the Jews and had resulted in what Jesus called tradition. He said that they made the word of God of none effect through their tradition which they had "delivered," using the word of the text. Again was the word of God made of none effect in the same way. Some good man wrote in the margin of his Bible his ideas about the philosophical nature of the Holy Trinity, and a hundred years after these ideas were accounted as sacred as the Bible itself.

We are still in the midst of the inevitable confusion, into which such a confounding of text and comment leads. We must accept the faith which was once delivered to the saints, and also as of equal value the remarks upon that faith which have since been made, in the pulpit or in the council chamber, by John Calvin or Martin Luther, or the Westminster As-

sembly of Divines,—a condition of things of which St. Paul never dreamed, and to which he would not have submitted; no, not for an hour. Indeed, to such a pass have we come that he who questions the infallibility of those excellent commentators, and suggests that saints and scholars of the twentieth century may perchance be as wise as they, is thought to have made a treacherous attack upon the faith itself.

The faith, as we have seen, was simple, not only in its lack of extended explanation, but in the brevity of its details. It touched the great essential verities. These were not, indeed, the only truths which might be gathered out of Holy Scripture, but they were the chief of all. St. Paul, who delivered unto the saints the fact of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, spoke also of the personal adornment of Christian women, of the manner in which the hair should be dressed and of the wearing of veils. But St. Jude's congregation knew very well what "the faith" meant. They knew that it included only the great facts of the work of the divine Redeemer.

Gradually, as theologians had leisure to assemble the many statements of the New Testament and tabulate them, one detail after another was added to the faith. Presently it

was required of Christians that they should believe in these minor details, even as they believed in the essential verities. And then authoritative interpretations of these minor details were added to the statement of the faith. So that by and by he who differed from his neighbors in his thoughts about the holy communion was held up to reputation as a heretic. Whoever could not subscribe to the prevalent idea of predestination had denied the faith. The doctrine of baptismal regeneration, variously defined, was set among the articles of the faith. And finally it came to pass that one might be accused of departing from the faith who differed from the opinion of some unknown Jewish scribe as to the date at which some book of the Old Testament was written.

We are still in the midst of this confusion. The faith has fallen into the condition of the sacrament of baptism in the middle ages, when it was surrounded by such a perplexity of symbols that the congregation knew not whether the baptism was the pouring of water, or the sprinkling of salt, or the putting on of a white robe, or the anointing with oil. What is the faith? Is it the doctrine of absolution, or the fact of the descent of Christ into hell, or the episcopal constitution of the

church, or the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch ?

Thus have we fallen into our unhappy divisions and are bewildered amongst many counselors, and perplexed amidst opposing voices; thus has that earnest contention for the faith, to which St. Jude exhorts us, become an angry contention betwixt brethren, a strife over small things, during which the faith goes neglected. It is well, indeed, to contend for the faith against those who deny it; but it is necessary to-day, as it was in Christ's own time, to defend the faith against those over-zealous supporters of it who would first hedge it about with their own interpretations and then defend the hedge as if it were the faith itself.

Jesus Christ is the heart of the faith. To believe in Him is the one supreme essential, compared with which all else is unimportant. To believe concerning Him that which the New Testament teaches and as the New Testament teaches it, is to hold the faith as the saints held it. Systems, digests, articles, confessions, theologies, have their right place in religion, and are of value just so far as they help men to know Christ and to love Him. When they set a distance between us and Him they obscure the faith and are in the way and

must be put out of the way. They come to us as one might approach a child who loved his father and mother with all the love of his heart and who believed in them with all his faith, saying: "My child, this love and faith of yours are very well as far as they go, but sit down here and let me give you lessons in physiology and psychology so that you may understand your father and mother and may express your emotions in scientific and accurate formulas." When the child has learned enough to be in doubt as to which is of the more importance, the faith or the formulas, he will have come into a position very like to that into which the controversial theologians would lead this generation. It is not true that faith and love need to be analyzed and set down in formal propositions. Dissection has to do only with the dead.

To know Jesus as his disciples knew Him, to be loyal to his teachings, to try more and more to live in his spirit, to believe in Him as the Only Begotten Son of God, full of grace and truth, to love Him as the Saviour of our souls, who died for us that we might be freed from sin's bondage, to put Him first in all our thoughts and to trust Him in all our ways, is to hold the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

FATHERS AND CHILDREN.

"He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers."—MAL. iv. 6.

THE last prophet of the Old Testament is writing his last sermon. He has delivered the message which God gave him; he has finished his work. Nobody knows so well as he himself how imperfectly and with what stammering utterance he has preached the word of God. He looks about among the people to whom he has ministered, and it seems to him, as it has seemed to many another faithful man in his position, that he has accomplished little. He has spoken truth, and spoken it with all his heart; and people have listened with customary, decent attention, and that has appeared to be the end of it.

Nevertheless, the prophet is not discouraged. He knows that his work is God's work, and that God succeeds. It is sometimes a slow process; most surprising and hard to understand is God's untiring patience; He lets some things go on an amazingly long time. But presently the permanent results appear, and the wise see light. The prophet is willing to

wait. He knows that this world is God's world, and that God is every day actively occupied in its affairs. To be discouraged is to lose faith in God. To think that the world is growing worse instead of better, and that the fathers of old time were saints and sages, while their children of this present are but fools and sinners, is not only to mistake the facts, but to deny the faith. God is in his world; every day the kingdoms of it are becoming more and more the kingdom of his Christ.

Accordingly, the prophet looks with confident anticipation into the time to come. The popular definition is not altogether amiss which associates the prophets with the future. They were men who were sure of the future, because they were sure of the eternal God. The work which Malachi lays down, another will take up, and do it better. Already he sees Him, this competent successor, coming into view in the far distance, the prophet greater than himself, strong and confident and close to God like old Elijah, speaking the word of God with power. He shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children and the heart of the children to their fathers.

It is true prophetic work. The minister of God comes always upon an errand of reconciliation. He is to reconcile man to God; that

is at the heart of it all. He is also to reconcile man to man ; to teach not only fatherhood but brotherhood ; to show that we are related each to the other, not as grains of sand in the heap, as the individualist would have us think, and not as ingredients in a chemical compound, lost in the mass, as the socialist would have us believe, but as members of the same family, or, as St. Paul puts it, in still stronger figure, members of the same body. And to these two works of reconciliation there is added a third, akin to them : He is to show how truth agrees with truth.

We need to be taught, day after day, that truth is twain rather than one. The shield has two sides. It seems a paradox, but it is verified by all reflection and experience, that truth is found not by taking either one of two seemingly contradictory extremes, nor by endeavoring to effect a compromise between the two, but by holding both extremes at the same time.

There are two great forces, centrifugal and centripetal, which hold this planet on its even course. They pull in opposite directions. It is essential to our safety that they both continue.

There are two other forces, attractive and repulsive, which lay hold on every atom of the

universe, and unceasingly contend one with the other.

If that contention were to be settled, and either of these forces were to get the mastery over the other, we would all die instantly. If the force of attraction were to prevail, this terrestrial globe would immediately be transformed into a cannon ball, harder than the compactest steel. If the force of repulsion were to prevail, the earth and all that is upon it would be changed in the twinkling of an eye into a cloud of thin mist blown by the wind. It is upon the condition of the balance of these powers that we live.

Chemistry and astronomy, and politics, and ethics, and theology, are alike in their assertion of the duality of truth. There is much discussion and wide difference of opinion, some maintaining one side and some the other, but in many cases it is impossible in the nature of things that there should be any such decisive settlement as comes at the end of an athletic contest. What is needed is not defeat and victory, but peace. Truth triumphs when each side, still holding stoutly to its own position, accepts also the position of the other.

This is evident in any list of theological alternatives. Which is true? That God is omnipotent or that man's will is free? That

Jesus Christ is human or divine ? Which is to be accepted, science or theology ? The material or the spiritual ? Miracle or law ? Is it not plain that to choose exclusively between any two of these is to fall into error ? The truth includes them both.

A similar series might readily be constructed in sociology or politics. Shall power be centralized, or shall it be distributed ? Hamilton said one thing and Jefferson another. Neither was right. Centralized power is despotism ; distributed power is anarchy. This nation has prospered by maintaining both propositions at the same time. Shall we love ourselves or shall we love our neighbors ? Shall egoism or altruism be the ruling principle of life ? Jesus Christ put the two together, telling us to love our neighbors as ourselves.

It is this principle of reconciliation which is behind the sentence with which the prophet ended his sermon. The time will come, he says, when the heart of the fathers shall be turned to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers. The misunderstanding which he has in mind is the old contention between youth and age, between the present and the past, between the new and the old, between the conservatives and the liberals.

The prophet declares as a message from God

that the fathers are mistaken and the children gone astray, and that right and truth will not appear until the fathers learn the lesson which must be taught them by their children, and the children receive instruction from their fathers. The conservatives are all wrong. So are the liberals.

What is needed is not the establishment of either side: that would be the coronation of error and the beginning of the kingdom of the devil. There must be agreement, and sympathy, and understanding.

The hearts of the fathers must be turned to the children.

These young people seem disposed to turn the whole world upside down. They are impatient of authority, and make light of precedent. They speak a new language, and quote from a new literature, and are filled with new ideas which they are desirous to try in daily life. Some of these new notions seem to the fathers to be irreverent, others to be revolutionary. Nevertheless, the conservatives must go to school to the liberals.

Take, for example, the preference of the present to the past in the study of theology. It is a matter of devout assurance with many good conservative people that theology does not admit of progress. All truth, they say,

was made known long ago, and nothing which is new is true. That does not hold if the Bible is to be taken as the interpreter of human life. For the Bible is a history of progress in theology. There is a difference plain to the simplest reader between the idea of God in the book of Judges and the idea of God in the book of Isaiah. And that difference is plainer still between the two testaments. Hebrew theology and Christian theology are not alike. And lest we should imagine that growth was meant to end when the last apostle preached his last sermon, there is a promise given that the Spirit of truth, assisting, teaching and revealing, shall abide with the church continually. And we are told that we are to be transformed by the renewing of our minds, by the thinking of new thoughts, by the welcome which we give to new ideas.

The truths, indeed, which are at the heart of religion do not change. The faith was once for all delivered to the saints. Yes, but we change; and thus our perception of truth, our appreciation and understanding of it change; and old things pass away and all things become new. Steam and electricity have never changed since the world began; they were once for all delivered to Adam. But it is within our own lifetime that these great forces

have come to be recognized and applied so as to revolutionize our manner of living.

There are truths in the teachings of Jesus Christ, the words of which are known by heart—truths homely and simple as the vapor which rises from the tea kettle on the kitchen stove—which, when they are seen aright and set in motion, will start revolutions of which we scarcely dream. No; the past cannot be permitted to build fences across the path of the present. The formula, "It is written," must be taken as Jesus Christ took it, and questioned What is written? and is it written well or ill?

It is also necessary, however, that the heart of the children should be turned to the fathers.

Some things are settled. Right thinking, like right conduct, recognizes the value of precedent, and makes progress by taking much for granted. We do not begin at the beginning. We start with the discoveries and the decisions of the past. The mathematician accepts the multiplication table and the axioms of geometry; the man of science accepts the great laws of gravitation and of evolution.

So the student of theology, if he is wise, accepts the profound doctrines which are declared in the creeds of the ages. He may undertake to verify them, if he will; as the mathematician may examine into the fourness

of two and two. There is nothing to forbid him. All things whatsoever are open to question, if he will. But the better way is for the children to take the foundation which was laid by the fathers, and to do their own work in the erection of the walls.

Even when the past seems to be in error, and it is suggested that we do away with it altogether, and clear the ground that we may build a straight-angled and enduring structure of our own, we will do well to wait. Not revolution, but evolution, is God's order.

Jesus stands in the presence of a mistaken past. Even its truth has been corrupted into error. It cumpers the ground. As represented by its accredited teachers, it is a hindrance to spiritual religion. What will He do with it? Better put it all away, and begin anew. No ; He declares that He has not come, as some thought, to destroy, but to fulfil.

To fulfil—that is the everlasting duty ; to take the conceptions of God and of the world which we inherit from the past and were taught by our fathers, and to fill them full of the new ideas which the Holy Spirit has revealed to us in wider experience and in deeper study. Sometimes the new wine will burst the old bottles, but not so often as we think.

This does not mean that the conservatives

should go over to the liberal side, nor that the liberals should turn conservative. It does not mean that the people who believe in authority and the people who believe in reason should change places. It does not contemplate a time when there shall be no more high churchmen, or no more broad churchmen.

When the prophets of God accomplish their blessed work of reconciliation, there will be as much diversity as ever. But there will be sympathy and understanding, also. Truth will be taught positively; by affirmation, not by denial.

Thus and thus do we read on our side of the shield; our neighbor reads differently, but he may be as right as we are; he may be looking at the other side. That will be the position of all good people.

Controversy will cease, but discussion will continue. There will be no compromise, but there will be coöperation. Prudence and valor will side by side attack the devil. The hearts of the conservatives shall be turned to the liberals, and the hearts of the liberals to the conservatives. God speed the day!

THE BATTLES OF PEACE.

"He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."—PROV. xvi. 32.

THE writer of this sentence was acquainted with the mighty, and had been present at the siege of cities. He was no hermit, dwelling serene in the still woods, nor man of letters sitting amidst his books, ignorant of war. He had himself marched to the beat of drums, and shared in the fierce joys of battle: and so had all his neighbors. In his day war was a universal and commonplace experience; fighting was forever going on; the bulletin boards in every city chronicled a battle every morning; every nation was a standing army; every man a soldier. The hero whom the people delighted to honor was the man who had slain his thousands. Nobody surpassed him in popular esteem except the still stouter hero, who had slain his tens of thousands. All the virtues of the time were aggressive, and demanded strength and alert action. The passive virtues did not count.

We are so familiar, at least in theory, with

a different idea, that it is hard for us to appreciate the feeling of amazement and of protest which these words must have caused in the minds of thoughtful people who were in full sympathy with their age. "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city." People could not understand it. Indeed, do we ourselves, after all these centuries of Christian training, really believe it? Is it true that the battles of peace are better than the battles of war? Is it true that the heroism of peace surpasses the heroism of the siege of cities?

The battles of peace are moral battles. When we meet temptation, when we encounter the devil, when we strive with our own selves, when we put ourselves in the way of peril, of difficulty or of hardship for the good of others, when men give their lives as Jesus Christ gave his life that other men may have life and may have it more abundantly, then are fought the brave campaigns of peace.

The massacres of Christians in China during the past few years have been invariably and immediately followed by a great increase in the number of missionaries offering their services for work in those dangerous neighborhoods. It is a manifestation of the same spirit

which made a hundred men instantly volunteer to go with Hobson into Santiago harbor. It is the highest heroism, shown in peace and for the love of Jesus Christ. It has been said that war is needed to bring out and strengthen the heroic instincts of the race: but the people who said it were not acquainted with the history of Christian missions.

A great English artist purposes to commemorate the heroism of humble life, by a series of sculptures and frescoes set along an open gallery in a public park in the East End of London. He and his friends will take the simple annals of the poor and illustrate the devotion, the self-sacrifice, the willing martyrdom, the splendid courage, there recorded. The first picture will be that of a shop girl who gave her life in a tenement-house fire to save her neighbors. These stories in carving and color will make it plain that it is not necessary to go out with guns to kill men in order to be heroic; they will celebrate the high heroism of peace.

The other day a hero of peace died in New York. He never took a city; though he had his share, too, of that form of glory. His great achievement was to make a city clean. He fought the dirt devil. It was by no means a romantic battle; there were no dramatic mo-

ments in it. It was just hard, unpleasant, and thankless work. But he did it. If anybody imagines for a moment that his task was somewhat remote from our task in the church, and that the condition of the streets does not greatly matter in religion, let him take notice that the death-rate in New York city under political misrule was twenty-five and that Colonel Waring brought it down to twenty. That means that in three years the clean streets saved over twenty thousand lives. Surely the Lord of Life, who said that He came to save men's lives, has taken account of that. Twenty thousand lives saved, twenty thousand homes protected against death, thousands upon thousands of people given a better place to live in, and a better heart in consequence to face their daily hardships,—there are not many heroes of war of whom it can be said as of this hero of peace, He hath saved his ten thousands! And for reward he had abuse; at the earliest opportunity he was turned out of office; not a city in the land wanted his expert services; finally, we sent him down to Havana, to clean a city whose citizens have an inherited prejudice for dirt, there to get the yellow fever. No, the heroes of peace have not even yet come to their reward.

The battles of peace call for bravery and

patience such as cannot be surpassed in any camp or on any field of battle. It is true that war is the work of heroes. A people who have sent their best sons to that task may not look lightly upon it. The man who goes out amidst the smoke of powder and the roar of guns to meet the charge of the enemy, adventuring his life, standing up to be shot at, must needs have a stout heart. But let us understand that the battles of peace demand as much as that, and that they who fight in them fight at even greater odds.

For in the battles of peace there is little of that high excitement which sets the nerves of men to tingling and intoxicates them with the enthusiasm of the supreme occasion. There is no music of the military band, no summons of the drum, no impetus of march nor charge nor sound of shouting. The battles of peace are terribly dull and still and monotonous and do not quicken the pulse. And that makes them doubly hard.

Moreover, the battles of peace are often fought alone. That is the fiercest kind of fighting. Upon the field of battle, where a man is but a part of a great army, where he looks to left and right and there on either side stretches the long rank of his brothers in uniform, keeping the same step, with shoulder

touching shoulder, all intent as he is on the same mighty mission, the individual is kept in his place, his strength, his courage, his endurance magnified. The solitary picket, alone at night, menaced by unseen dangers, unhelped by the company of his fellows, knows well the difference between that silent watch and the splendid swing of the swift march into battle.

Most of the moral battles have to be fought alone. The man stands face to face with some temptation. There he is by himself. The devil sets upon him sore, and he must fight it out alone. Many and many a time he fights a losing battle, just because of that. Many a man who in the company of his neighbors would scorn to do a mean, unclean, dishonest thing, is waylaid by the watchful tempter, taken unawares and solitary, and miserably and tragically defeated. The daily papers are full of the records of these lost battles, where brave men, fighting alone, played the part of cowards and surrendered their own souls.

The battles of peace differ also in another respect from the battles of war. They go on without end. The devil fights that most disastrous of all campaigns, a campaign of waiting. The battles of war are for the most part sharp and short. The opposing forces hurl themselves the one upon the other, and in an

hour or two the day is lost and won. But these long moral battles last forever. There is no truce in this war. Temptation never rests. They who have a quiet time and are altogether out of the fight have won that shameful peace by their surrender. They have put their hands between the hands of the adversary. Everybody else has to fight, and to keep on fighting, over and over again, like the battle with the giant who when thrown to earth got up stouter than ever; the same strife with an unruly temper, the same contest with an ungoverned appetite, the same hard struggle to beat down under our feet and keep there the indolence, the selfishness, the meanness, which seem to be inseparable from our life; day by day we must be at it, in a fight where to be weary means to be in danger of defeat, and the flag of truce is the signal of surrender.

As for the endeavor to improve the neighborhood, to amend the town, to drive out the evil forces which assail the community, everybody who has undertaken these tasks knows that there is no end to them. "Oh, what a world this would soon be," exclaims one who speaks out of abundant experience, "if the perseverance of the saints were made of as enduring stuff as the perseverance of the sin-

ners!" If the battles of peace could be fought to a finish, like the battles of war, if the powers of right could engage the forces of sin in one swift and decisive onset and the war ended, how much easier it would be. This long, monotonous, slow, interminable, daily and hourly struggle calls for a kind of patient strength and constant courage such as is not often needed in the ordinary sword and powder war. It is true, as the proverb tells us,—our own reason and experience confirm it—that "he that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city."

The battles of peace, then, have these two characteristics: first, that he who fights in them must often fight alone; and secondly, that he who fights, whether alone or in the company of his fellows, is engaged not in a battle but in a war, he must fight long. It is to be said further that these battles are fought upon two different fields.

Sometimes the strife is waged in our own hearts, between that side of our nature which is akin to the animals and that in which we partake of the spirit of Almighty God. That is a matter of universal experience. That is the battlefield which is described in the text, partly because it thus concerns all human be-

ings, and partly because it is necessary to gain the victory on this field before a man may go on in his strength to any other. It is the narrow pass which must be won before we can enter far into the enemy's country. Let us remember that, in our daily tasks and temptations. Our besetting sin is to be met in martial fashion, "as a brave man meets a foe"; we are to set ourselves in soldierly opposition to it; we are to fight it. It is to be definitely located as if it were an ambushed enemy, and we are to attack it, striking the stoutest blows we can, and overcome it. It is occupation for all that is bravest and strongest in us.

In the same spirit, let us undertake our daily task. The hard things that we have to do, the burdens that we have to carry, the lessons that we have to learn, let us set about them like an army taking a city. The supreme thing in life is mastery. To be master of oneself and a leader in good causes is to live as God intends a man to live. How is that mastery gained? By doing the common task masterfully, by refusing to be daunted by the difficulty of it. Thus was the man who had used ten talents well put in command over ten cities. That was where he belonged. He had earned that. He had been faithful in that which was least, and thus in the doing of the daily task

had become the master of himself and of his fellow-men. It makes a deal of difference whether or not the student gets his lesson. The chapter of irregular verbs stands in vital relation to all the undertakings of his future life. When he commands that, we know that he shall also presently command what he will. When he is defeated in the class-room and takes his defeat complacently, we may easily predict that defeat and defeat shall be written down against his name on every page of the history of his life.

But this is not the only battlefield. More and more in this present time we are becoming aware of our relation to the society about us. The old idea was that the less the Christian had to do with this bad world, the better. Jesus Christ never taught that, never intended that. What He prayed for his disciples was that they might be kept from the evil of that world into which they were called to go upon their Christian mission. It is true that Lot was summoned out of Sodom, but that was only after he had made a failure of his own life. Among all the men of that town he had not made ten friends to whom he had imparted the principles of faith and righteousness which he had himself been taught. St. Peter says, indeed, that Lot was a just man whose soul

was vexed by the words and deeds of his unrighteous neighbors. But that is saying little. It is plain that Lot did no effective service in amending the neighborhood in which he lived. It was time for him to go. If he had been a better man he would have been directed to stay and save the town. That at least is the mission of the Christian. And the Christian is coming more and more to understand it. Thus we are taking our places in the ranks for another kind of battle, for the strife against sin not only in our own hearts but everywhere, in the neighborhood, in the city, in human society. We used to think that individual religion would meet all the needs of men; we know now that social religion is essential also. The world will never be a right world until the aspirations of the individual are assisted by amendments in the constitution of society.

Thus there is a call to-day for volunteers in the war that is being waged in the world of industry.

Men are wanted who will stand upon the side of justice and fraternity; wise men, who shall study these hard problems intelligently and dispassionately and without respect of persons, and tell us what to think and what to do, and how to get out of the dreadful and men-

acing conditions under which so much of the work of the world is done; good men, who shall have the Christian courage to speak the truth even when it is unwelcome, and to maintain the right in the face of prejudice and opposition.

There is a call for volunteers in the battles that are being fought in the field of politics.

Men are needed who understand the meaning of a public office, who know that it exists not for the purpose of paying somebody's salary but for the sake of the welfare of the whole community, and that it belongs of right only to the person who can do the work and do it best. It is plain that there are many people by whom the offices of the city and the state are regarded simply as opportunities for personal profit or as bribes to pay for political service. We are coming to see that the men who hold this pernicious opinion are the enemies of the people, enemies more real, more hostile and more dangerous to the welfare of the nation than any men who carried guns on the San Juan hill. It was a splendid deed to go into the press of battle for the sake of the country in the time of war, but that fine service will lose its lustre if the men who followed the flag shall be contented now to stand by and let this worse enemy possess the country under pre-

tense of peace. Regiment by regiment the men are being mustered out; the war is over: but the country is not saved. The hardest battles are yet to fight. In these days, when the republic is encompassed with new difficulties and menaced with old dangers, there is need for an abiding and increasing patriotism.

When the call came for volunteers, what a response it had! Men who had been living quiet lives, doing homely tasks, making no clamor in the world, accounted commonplace enough by their next neighbors, showed themselves akin to all the gallant knights and captains of the past, and manifested anew the mighty forces which are hidden beneath the surface of society. Now we want that strength and sacrifice, blessed with a new and unfailing consecration, applied to the new needs. We want the soldiers of the war, who have shown that they love the country enough to die for it if need be, to prove that love again by living for it. We want their courage in the battles of peace.

It takes no war to make an age heroic. Every common day shines with opportunities for noblest service.

"He speaks not well who doth his time deplore,
Naming it new and little and obscure,
Ignoble and unfit for lofty deeds.

All times were modern in the time of them,
And this no more than others. Do thy part
Here in the living day, as did the great
Who made old days immortal. So shall men
Gazing back to this far-looming hour,
Say: 'Then the time when men were truly men:
Though wars grew less, their spirits met the test
Of new conditions; conquering civic wrong:
Saving the state anew by virtuous lives
Guarding their country's honor as their own,
And their own as their country's and their son's;
Defying leagued fraud with single truth;
Not fearing loss; and daring to be pure.
When error through the land raged like a pest,
They calmed the madness caught from mind to mind,
By wisdom drawn from eld and counsel sane.
And as the martyrs of the ancient world
Gave Death for man, so nobly gave they Life;
Those the great days, and that the heroic age.' "

—*R. W. Gilder.*

God help us to make that true in our own
lives, that we may rule our spirits—and take
cities also.

A HOLY LENT.

"This kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting."—ST. MARK ix. 29.

THE lesson is that any one who would do spiritual tasks must have spiritual strength; and that spiritual strength, like any other kind of strength, comes by exercise. The apostles had been taking too much for granted. They supposed that their companionship with Jesus would of itself make them spiritually strong. And when the father came to them while the Master was up on the mountain, and brought his demoniac boy for them to heal, they at once undertook to heal him. But they failed. They failed, as any man who has been living an ordinary, quiet life, without much exertion, will fail to lift a heavy weight. That sort of work needs training. Whoever will do it must give special attention to himself. The apostles had not been taking enough spiritual exercise. That was what was the matter with them. As Jesus said, they had not been praying enough, nor fasting enough.

It is the business of every one of us to cast out devils. All reform, all betterment, is an

exorcising of the devil. In the early churches they had a regular official in every congregation who was called the exorcist, and who cast out devils every Sunday morning. But we ought all of us to be exorcists, casting out devils every day in the week—out of ourselves first.

We often wonder, like the apostles, why it is that we make so little headway in this Christian fight. The world is still a bad world, in spite of eighteen centuries and more of Christian preaching. The city directory is crowded with the names of heathen, the daily papers are daily records of the triumphs of the devil. The devil is not cast out of the world of business; the devil is not cast out of the world of society; the devil is not even cast out of our own Christian hearts. And we wonder why. We come to Christ, sometimes in despair, asking the apostles' question, Why could not we cast him out? And the Lord's answer is the same as his answer to the disciples: "This kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting."

That is, what we need is more attention to spiritual exercise. We go on like the apostles, taking things for granted. We imagine that our common decent living, daily praying and weekly church-going will give us all the spiritual training that we need. But that is a

mistake. We need something special. We need to put ourselves under some sort of extraordinary drill. We need to devote ourselves sometimes, in an unusual way, to prayer and fasting.

Of course I am thinking about Lent. It seems to me that we have here the real reason for keeping Lent. If we are no better than the apostles, if we find it just as hard to cast out devils as they did, if we have the same spiritual needs that they had, then here is our opportunity. For Lent is a season of prayer and fasting. I know that Lent is commended to us by its venerable antiquity, and by its position in the prayer book; but we keep it for a more practical and vital reason than either of these—because it helps us and we need it.

One of the good things about Lent is that it does not last all the year round. If it did, it would probably be neglected altogether. And it would certainly lose a large part of its value. We ought, indeed, to try every year to lift up our ordinary lives a little closer to the key of these extraordinary weeks. The Lents ought to make a spiritual ladder, climbing step by step, and year by year, toward the better realization of heaven. But the great thing about Lent is its unusualness. It comes with a message, with a reminder, with a word from

God. It stops us as we go about our business; it arrests our attention—it makes us think. And before it grows to be such a familiar presence that we no longer heed it, it is gone.

The truth is that human nature needs the unusual. There is no use in talking about keeping Sunday every day in the week. That will, indeed, be the arrangement of the almanac of heaven. But the conditions will be somewhat different then. Just now, made as we are, set under limitations of humanity, we need the interruption of Sunday. To take out this unusual day in belief that thus we would keep a holy week is to imagine a contradiction of experience. It is evident in the lives of most people who are privately leaving Sunday out, who put away the ancient customs of that religious festival, who stay away from church, that the result is spiritual degeneration. Inevitably, in due course of time, they leave God and the soul out. The cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches crowd in fast enough even upon those who make wise use of all the spiritual opportunities there are.

Human life is all the time in peril of becoming secularized. A thousand influences are forever tugging at us to pull us down. All growth is a victory over degeneration, and a victory that is won only by an effort. The

easiest kind of life for a man to live is the life of an animal, to eat and sleep and play. It is a good deal harder to live in the plane above that—to think, to cultivate the mind. Every busy man and woman knows how the daily drudgery of life makes intellectual existence difficult. But the hardest kind of life to live is the spiritual life, in which we learn to listen to the still voice of conscience, and draw near to God, and fill our minds with the greatest thoughts that man can think, and keep our souls within reach of the influences that make toward spiritual growth. Every Christian knows what a fight it is to live that life. The slightest relaxation of effort lets us down toward one of the lower planes. When we stop we drop.

And so we need all the help that we can get, all the reminding voices, all the days with messages, all the unusual seasons of devotion with their salutary interruption and their blessed inspirations, all the Sundays and all the saints' days and all the Lents of the Christian calendar. They help us to put the emphasis where we ought to put it, and to think the thoughts that we ought to think. They give us spiritual strength to cast out the persistent devil.

There are two ways of keeping Lent, a right way and a wrong way. It is easy enough to

see the difference. If our Lent helps us, if we can feel and know that we are better for it, we have kept it in the right way. For that is the purpose of this religious season—to get help. Not to go a certain number of times every week to church, not to stay away from the theatre, not to abstain from certain articles of food—these matters are all on the outside, they are but the distant fringes of the outer garment of Lent. The heart of Lent is the need of help, the need of spiritual help, and the desire to be helped. Any kind of Lent that helps us is a right Lent. What we all want to do is to keep Lent in the right way.

We will be likely to get help out of Lent in proportion to the definiteness of our purpose. There are few things so pernicious in religion as generality. We make some sort of general resolve that we will be indefinitely better. And we imagine that we are treading Satan under foot. We might as well imagine that we are treading under foot the whole state of Massachusetts. We persuade ourselves that we are making an assault upon the allied armies of the world, the flesh and the devil while really we are only planning such an attack as a corporal's guard might make upon a front of battle a hundred miles in length.

And more than this, we never get beyond

the resolution. We never do anything at all. Indefinite good resolutions are nothing but castles in the air. They have no standing on the maps of the kingdom of heaven. Nobody ever built a real castle out of a good resolution without an accompaniment of plans and specifications. That is, a good resolution, to amount to anything, must be definite. It must enter into particulars.

Lent is a time to train ourselves into new spiritual strength by the religious exercises of prayer and fasting.

The words "and fasting" are omitted in the Revised Version, as they are in many ancient manuscripts and in the lives of many modern Christians. There is no doubt, however, about the fasts of Jesus Christ. Whether he said anything just here about fasting or not, matters very little. He did say something about it in the Sermon on the Mount and in other places, and in the good example of his own life. Jesus was not an ascetic. We know that very well. He came "eating and drinking" even to the scandal of some severe religionists who could not think of real sanctity apart from a long face and hollow cheeks.

We make a mistake, however, if we think that Jesus discountenanced fasting. The only kind of fasting that He disapproved of was a

fasting for the sake of a reputation for religion. And that is no more to be thought of as real fasting than the revolutions of a prayer-wheel are to be accounted as real prayer. It is a most subtle form of self-indulgence.

No; fasting is a part of the Christian religion. It is one of the recognized and recommended helps to holy living. It is one of those exercises in the training of a good Christian which have been actually proved by long experience to be of avail for spiritual strength. After all, the real reason for fasting is like the real reason for keeping Lent; we need it.

For think of the advantages of fasting. Yes; the spiritual advantages of literal fasting, of abstaining from certain articles of food. Fasting is good for reminder, good for discipline and good for emphasis.

Fasting helps the memory. We cannot well forget, if we are put in mind of it three times a day, that this is Lent. That does not of itself insure, of course, a holy Lent, but it does avail to keep the season in our thoughts. And that is the beginning of all right observance.

Fasting helps the will. It is an exercise in saying "no." That is the hardest word in the English language to pronounce. We need practice in it. Fasting gives us an opportunity to practice. Of course, these Lenten self-de-

nials do not often touch those great temptations in which we must say no, or suffer for it; for the most part we give up things that are entirely harmless. Yet they have, after all, quite as much to do with real sins as the rowing weights in a gymnasium have to do with real water, or as the military manoeuvres of the parade ground have to do with real war. Fasting gives us drill in saying "no." Every good Lent makes us better Christian soldiers.

Fasting helps us toward a better emphasizing of our lives. It keeps the body under for the sake of the soul. We need that. Christian living ought not to be a giving up of the bad for the sake of the good. There is nothing essentially Christian about that. The most ordinary ideals of decent existence demand that. Christianity builds up on that foundation the structure of a life in which the prevailing principle is the giving up of even the good for the sake of the better. Christianity emphasizes the best. It sets the soul emphatically first.

The most profitable fasting is that which says not "no," but "yes." That is, we get the most good out of a Lent in which we have fasted for the sake of some kind of positive good. Suppose that fasting from food can save money which we may be able to use for

the benefit of our brothers and sisters who have to keep Lent all the year round. The advantage of that fasting is evident enough. Let us live more simply; for six weeks, at least, let us cut down the expenses of our tables; and the money that is saved let us apply to the evening up of the inequalities of our modern life. Give it to the poor.

Or suppose that another form of our abstinence is a withdrawal from social gaiety. For six weeks, at least, we will not go to a party or to a play. That is of little spiritual advantage unless the time thus saved is put to religious uses. Yes; and the money, too. If we would spend a good, consistent, genuine, and profitable Lent, let us add up the amounts that we spent since the middle of January for our own pleasure, and set that much religiously aside this Lent to be used in making this hard life a little brighter and easier for some less favored brothers and sisters of ours.

No one, I think, will deny that this is a good, sensible, and Christian way to fast. Let us not leave fasting out of our Lenten resolutions. The other essential of a holy Lent is prayer. It ought not to be necessary to say so much about that. And yet it must be confessed that we are in too much of a hurry nowadays to say our prayers. The morning

paper has become a general substitute for the family Bible. The daily work tends more and more to crowd out the daily worship. How is it in your house about family prayers? That is one of the signs of the religious consecration of the home. And it is one of the sacramental signs that are real means of grace. It brings religious consecration with it. It helps to sanctify the daily round of common life. It helps to make a Christian habitation something more than a lodging-house, where people eat and sleep. Lent is a good time to emphasize this helpful custom of family prayers.

Lent is a good time to emphasize prayer. And we all need to have prayer emphasized. It lapses so easily into conventionality, and loses the heart out of it. The words that we say in the service, the words we say when we kneel down in our rooms, are so often only words, golden bowls empty of incense. We need to take more time and more thought. We need to get more of ourselves into our prayers. Prayer is communion with God. It is a drawing consciously near to God. And we need it. "This kind cometh not forth but by prayer." What kind? Any kind. Whoever would cast out any sort of devils must strengthen himself by the spiritual exercise of prayer.

SANCTIFICATION AND SERVICE.

"For their sakes I sanctify myself."—ST. JOHN xvii. 19.

"FOR their sakes" means social service. "I sanctify myself" means personal holiness. The words declare the spirit and the method of Jesus Christ. It is the Christian ideal in a single sentence.

There is a picture by Murillo of a princess in a hospital. The princess is beautiful, as a princess ought to be; but the hospital is ugly. The patients are all lepers. The princess is washing the face of a leper. This is St. Elizabeth, whose loaves of bread were changed into roses of paradise. The picture is a symbol of social service.

There is a picture by Domenichino of a woman and an angel. They are looking together at a page in a book. St. Francesca, in the legend, was a Roman lady of high position who in the midst of the cares and pleasures of society lived the devout life. One day while she was at her prayers she was called away seven times while she was trying to read a single verse in a psalm, and every time responded to the call, going with all patience

and cheerfulness to meet the duty which demanded her. When she came back the seventh time, she found the verse written in letters of celestial light by the finger of an angel. The picture is a symbol of personal sanctification.

One day the Master took three of the apostles and climbed with them the Transfiguration Hill, and was there glorified before them. Moses and Elias came down out of the sky, and the divine voice spoke from the overshadowing cloud. Then Peter, always the first to speak, uttered an impulsive wish. Let us stay, he said; let us never go down again into the bad world. Here in this blessed seclusion, in the company of Jesus and Moses and Elias, far from all destruction, far from all temptation, here let us abide. "Let us build three tabernacles, one for thee and one for Moses and one for Elias." It was but a foolish speech. One of the evangelists tells us that Peter made it because he knew not what to say. It was but an idle prayer to ask that Moses and Elias should come down out of a warm, comfortable paradise to dwell in tents under the trees, on the rough side of a Galilean hill. Yet it was natural enough, and not to be ashamed of. And the reason why it could not be granted was because there was a case of need at that moment at the foot of the

hill. There was a father in distress about his boy. And through the plain, and in the villages and towns about, and up and down the world of sin and sorrow, there were other hands held out, and other people needing to be helped. The top of the hill was a beautiful place, near heaven, but it was impossible that the Master or the disciples should remain. Down they must come to help. The scene is an illustration of the need of social service.

But on another day, Jesus and the apostles stood beside the lake, and there were many people with them. People were crowding about them, eager to be taught, crying to be healed, bringing their temptations and their troubles that they might get strength and guidance and comfort, and the apostles, we are told, had not time even to eat. Suddenly, in the midst of the busy day, the Master bade them stop, and get into a boat, and row away to the other side of the lake, where there were no people, and they might rest and pray. He bade them, as it seemed, turn their back upon opportunity, and leave these folk who needed them. They were to care for their own souls. They were to enter quietly into the recognized presence of God, and be still, so that presently they might go back and do more good than

ever. The scene is an illustration of the need of personal sanctification.

You see how these two pictures from the lives of the saints and these two scenes from the lives of the apostles belong together, and how they all meet in this high word of the Master: For their sakes I sanctify myself.

The meaning is that social service and personal sanctification belong together. Either is vain without the other. It is impossible to be good without doing good; it is impossible effectually to do good without being good. These are the two propositions which I desire to illustrate and emphasize.

First, then, personal sanctification must bear fruit in social service. Otherwise that will happen of which our Lord gives warning when He says, "he that will save his life shall lose it." He who devotes himself altogether to the saving of his own soul, shall lose his soul. All his prayers and fastings, all his strivings after heaven, shall go for naught. For the benediction of God depends on what we are, and in order to be what God desires we must love our neighbors as ourselves. Selfishness, even in religion, ruins character. You know what happens to a cup of water when it is taken out of the brook and left to stand: it becomes stagnant, it is spoiled. It needs the

breeze and the current; it needs to go with the stream. And so do we. The religious life, that it may be kept sweet and sound, needs companionship, and sympathetic intercourse, and the impulse of fraternity, and a place in the natural human world.

Suppose that the apostles had stayed upon the mount of transfiguration. It is hard to imagine it, hard to imagine men who were filled as they were with the spirit of ministry, who had lived with Jesus Christ, being content to delight themselves with heavenly joys and let the great world go. Heaven, we believe, will be a place both of joy and of rest; but rest is not idleness. The most restful thing that we can do is that toward which our whole best nature goes out, so that we want to do that more than anything else in the world. It is impossible to believe that St. Paul has been sitting down in heaven for nineteen hundred years, folding his hands and doing nothing; or kneeling down, folding his hands, and doing nothing for his neighbors. The other world cannot be a selfish world. It is hard to imagine the apostles, who were living the life of heaven here on earth, content to stay on the transfiguration hill. But let us imagine it. The tabernacles are built, and the days pass. At first their joy will be beyond all utterance. Prayer

and praise, and communion with God, will occupy their thoughts and hearts. And then, they will get naturally tired. The selfishness in which they are indulging themselves will begin to affect them. They will still pray, but with wandering thoughts. They will still praise, but with voices which will now and again get off the key. By and by, their lives will become stagnant, like the cup of water; and the end will be the defeat and failure of their purpose.

Who are the worst people in the Bible? Who are they in whom the Lord Jesus when He was here found least to praise and most to blame? Not the rich, though there are hard enough things said in the New Testament about the rich. Mary and Martha and Lazarus, dear friends of Jesus, were rich. And not the sinners, not the common sinners of the street; to them He spoke in such brotherly fashion that He was called the friend of sinners. No; the worst people in the New Testament are the good people. They are the good people. They are the ministers and wardens and vestrymen of the church of our Lord's time, conspicuous for their religion, diligent in their attendance at services, representatives of the kingdom of God. Jesus was never called the friend of Pharisees. It was from

people of our kind, eminently respectable, religious, that our Lord got the least hearing. We were they who persecuted Him and crucified Him.

Why? What was the matter? The matter was that the Pharisees were giving themselves altogether to the work of personal sanctification, leaving social service out. They did much which was admirable and worthy of all imitation, but the saving virtue they omitted. They were unfraternal folk.

One of the most serious facts in the case is that they were so confidently unconscious of their situation. That they were as approved by God as they were by their neighbors, that they would certainly go to heaven when they died, they doubted not for a moment. And yet all the time they were under God's displeasure. That, I say, is one of the most serious facts in the case, because it is possible that we, who are confident as they were that we have the approbation of God, may miss it as they did. Indeed, it is absolutely and everlastingly certain that unless to our endeavors after personal sanctification we are adding social service, we are in no wise fulfilling the law of Christ.

We must do good if we would be good. We must make the world a little better day by

day because of our lodging in it. Happily, we can all do that. It costs but little to do good. The Christian church began its long history of benefaction with the words, Silver and gold have I none. By and by, when the church could say that no longer, neither could she say, as the cardinal reminded the pope, Rise up and walk. The church in her poverty has been richest in good works. It is to-day a positive advantage to a church in working among the poor to have no money. It immediately simplifies the situation. The emphasis is put where it belongs, on friendship and the spiritual side of life. Everybody can be of fraternal service. Kind words cost no money. To be thoughtful for others, to be watchful of opportunities to do courteous and kindly and helpful deeds,—this is easily within our means. And without this, be we never so attentive to the externals of religion, all our goodness will be fatally defective.

This, then, is the first of the two propositions which are contained in the Master's word, For their sakes I sanctify myself:—In order to be good, we must do good. And the second is like unto it:—In order to do good we must be good. For their sakes, for the sake of better social service, what did our Lord do? He sanctified Himself. For at the

heart of all right social service, the most important thing about it, is the personality of the doer of the deed. The deed counts with God and with man in proportion as the giver gives himself and in proportion as the gift is worth giving.

Suppose that the apostles had stayed that day beside the lake, and worked. They would have grown weary first in body, then in mind, and then in soul. Presently they would have spoken with their lips only. Their hearts would not have been in it: and the blessing of God would not have been in it, either. And the work would by and by have become mechanical, and worth nothing. The great achievement is not to get work done, but to get it well done, so that results grow out of it. The work is tested by its fruit. It is plainly better, though many times we do not see it, to do a little fruitfully than to do a great deal and have but our labor for our pains.

Everybody who has tried to be of use to others knows how the fruitfulness of service depends on the personality of the worker. How often must we say in the presence of our neighbor's anxiety, or trouble, or doubt, or overmastering temptation, Oh, it is myself that hinders men from helping! The words are right enough, and there is wisdom and

guidance and consolation in them: I know that. But it is the tone of the voice, it is the look of the face, it is myself that must interpret and enforce the words. Did I but live nearer to God I could be of so much more help. We all know what that means. Even when one is tired it is impossible to work well. That is why Jesus took the disciples away to get rested. He wanted them to give to others the very best of gifts, themselves at their best.

Another time, they came to Him and said, Why did we fail? We tried to be of help, we tried to cast out the devil, and we failed: what was the matter? And He answered, This kind cometh not forth but by prayer. They had not made themselves ready for the deed, they were not spiritually strong to do it, they were not good enough. They needed to sanctify themselves.

There is a general desire to-day to be of use in the world. The social spirit pervades society. It stirs us to unaccustomed goodness. It sends us out on errands into neglected places. It is the most conspicuous fact in our modern life. Unhappily, there is beside it another fact, almost equally conspicuous, the fact of neglect of the institutions of religion. People are a great deal more interested than they were in doing good to others, but they are not

nearly so interested in going to church. The idea of service is emphasized, but the idea of sanctification is many times lost out of sight.

Man is best served by those who in serving their fellow-men serve God, and who go about their work in the name and in the spirit of Jesus Christ. No other social work is of abiding value. No other philanthropy can avail to help the needy. Society needs social workers, but it needs Christian workers a great deal more. It needs men and women who love their fellow-men with the love of Jesus Christ, and who daily bring to Him their perplexities, their problems, their failures and successes, that He may help them to help others.

This is the mission of the church in the community: this is what the services and the sacraments mean: this is why the doors stand open and the bells ring. The mission of the church is to help us to be good that we may do good. It is to sanctify us for the sake of service.

Jesus Christ needed it. One might have said that living as He did in the constant presence of the Father, times and places would have had no part in his religious life. But that is not the fact. We read how He spent whole nights in prayer upon the mountain, how He was wont to rise early, a great while

before day, that He might go out along the solitary shore for quiet, and meditation and prayer. Who shall say that He can live the life of service on easier terms than the Master? For our sakes He sanctified Himself. For his sake, and for the sake of our friends and neighbors, we must do the same.

DOES GOD CARE?

"He careth for you."—I PETER v. 7.

DOES God care? It is the supreme question. Sooner or later it comes into almost every human life. Men and women with tears in their eyes, with the sky black above them and hope dead within their hearts, are asking it every day.

The good things and the bad things seem to be so indifferently distributed; the tenement houses and the stone palaces seem to be so unequally allotted among men; some people seem to have so much better places than other people at the feast of life, and to be served so much more abundantly and attentively, opportunity here and no opportunity there seems so universally the order of the day; the lightning, the earthquake, the accident, the flood, the fever, seem so plainly to have no respect of persons; the arrows of the angel of bereavement seem to be shot so frightfully at random, with such reckless lack of aim, that this dread question, Does God care? forces itself upon our attention. We must ask it.

Sometimes it seems as if just here the two

great Bibles are in open opposition. God's Bible written out in ink on paper, does not seem to agree at all with God's other Bible, written in the world of Nature and upon the heart of man by the hand of experience.

Nature appears to say that God does not care; that He does not care, that is, for the individual.

God does care for the race. He is plainly judging, helping, uplifting the race. We can see that. We can read it in the pages of all the histories. The bad things here have turned out to be good. This great war, that fearful pestilence or tyranny or terrible oppression, we can see what they mean as we stand off at this long distance and look back at them. They were very dreadful and unintelligible to the people who stood close by and watched. Often, they seemed to mean that God was very angry with the race or had forgotten man altogether. They were like disfiguring blots on the fair canvas of history; they spoiled the picture. But for us, standing off where the perspective is right, they fit into the picture perfectly. We see what they were for. We see their place in the design and color of the whole.

Yes; God is good to man—but is God good to men? He does care for the race; but does

He care for you and me whose small lives take up so small a place in the great crowd? That fierce war, which overcame a barbarous nation, and made a lasting betterment in the subsequent history of that people, how did it seem to the poor fellows who lay bleeding on the battlefields? How did it look to the wives made widows and to the little ones made fatherless? God cared for Germany in that old time when He gave the victory to the legions of Rome; but did He care for poor Hans, killed in the forest, and for poor Gretchen, crying her eyes out in her lonely home? It is not so easy to see that.

Evidently, whatever explanation may be made, a vast deal of vicarious sacrifice is forever going on. Every day, men and women are dying for humanity, throwing themselves into some dreadful trench or other that they who follow may march safely over. All progress has been won by pain. All advance is made possible by the offering which the individual is forever making for the race. Liberty has been bought for us, age after age, by men who lay in prisons, faced cannon, and fell on battlefields, giving their lives that we might breathe free air. The cross is the symbol of a fact as old as time, as wide as the world. After all, is it not expedient that one man

should die for the people? Is it not best that the race should be uplifted and the great moral march go on, though individuals fall in the endeavor? Is it not wise and right to value humanity higher than any man?

But somehow this doctrine of the survival of the fittest is not a comfortable creed, except to the fittest. To be told that our pain is good for our neighbors, and that our loss is for the profit of mankind in general, will not make us happy, unless we are more unselfishly heroic than most people. So few of us are heroes! To all except the strong, nature teaches a lesson of despair.

But the other Bible teaches a different sermon. Its pages, first and last, are full of consolation. It addresses itself especially to the obscure, the insignificant, the weak, the unheroic, the poor, the weary, and declares persistently that God does care—that God cares for every individual, separately, personally and particularly. Open the Bible almost anywhere, and you will come upon this message of comfort.

This individual care of God is affirmed with clear understanding of the difficulty which is involved in the contrast between the infinite greatness of God and the microscopic insignificance of man. "Behold, the nations are as

a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance." The whole race of man is placed in the vast scales of the universe only as the dust which lies unheeded on the surface of the balance pan. They knew that. They considered that. And yet these prophets of the old time constantly declared that the great God on high cares for every smallest creature upon this little earth.

When Jesus came He emphasized that affirmation. God is our Father, Jesus said. Even the birds and flowers God cares for; even the hairs of our head are all numbered. Again and again, by inference and by declaration, Jesus taught the individual and personal beneficence and love of God. Nothing else is so uniformly prominent. Jesus came for this supreme and inclusive purpose, to tell us that God cares.

I am willing to take the word of Jesus about that. I am willing to take his word, who, to say the least, knew a great deal more of God and of man than any of us do. If Jesus Christ, looking out from a life more troubled than any of our lives, with the shadow of the cross darkening the end of it, looking into a world whose pain and sin he saw far more clearly than any of us see, could confront this great unsolved problem of human sorrow with

God's power on one side of the equation and man's pain on the other side, and could somehow work it out so as to get "love" for an answer, if He could say "God cares," I am content with that. I believe that God does care. I am willing to stop just there and to rest simply upon that.

Still, though we may not be able to work out the whole problem, we may solve some part of it. At least, we may discover some of the mistakes which we have made, and set them right. We may not get quite the true answer even then. But if we can be shown some place where we have affirmed that four and two make five, it will be some satisfaction to set that straight.

There is one such place in which most of us blunder badly: we do not know what is best for us. We are like a schoolboy who should make continually mistakes about the figure 9, sometimes calling it 6, and sometimes 2, and sometimes 0. Evidently, he would make bad work with his sums. What the best is we know not. Sometimes we call it the indifferent, and sometimes the bad, and sometimes the worst. God sends us what we need, and in the very midst of it we cry out that God has forgotten us.

We can see that clearly in the lives of nations.

We can sometimes see it in the lives of other people. Pain, loss, grief, enter into our neighbor's life, and we are able to see, looking on dispassionately from the outside, how that trouble is the very thing which the man needed. Without that he would have gone on, quite commonplace, not especially helpful to anybody, to the end. That hard, sudden shock woke him up. It made a man of him.

Sometimes, but not so often nor so easily, we can see that in our own lives. We could, no doubt, see it better if we lived longer. Methuselah must have changed his mind a great many times during that long life of his. A great many times he must have blotted the word "misfortune" out of his diary, and written "blessing" in the place of it.

No; we make mistakes concerning what is really best for us. We ask, Does God care? when God is caring most.

Our ideas of taking care differ sometimes from God's. They differ as the foolishness of little children differs from the wisdom of their parents. Many a time the little children are rebellious because they are so wisely cared for. They misread the meaning. They do not understand. That is the case with all of us who think that we know what is best for us better than God does.

It is not likely that God cares greatly when we miss some of our ambitions. Some of our social and commercial worries do not distress Him. He may be sorry when we are disappointed, but it is the sorrow of the mother whose baby is crying for the looking-glass and the hammer. The mother is sorry that the child should be so foolish. Concerning many of the things which trouble us in this complicated and artificial civilization, it is not likely that God cares.

Sometimes we are tempted to say that God does not care whether we are good or bad, because He seems to treat us all alike. If there is any difference, it is the rascals who get the triumphs, and the righteous who get the tribulations. And a man will say: "I have served God all my life and here I am poor, and sick, and miserable; while my neighbor across the way, who has not said his prayers for a dozen years is living in his own house and has a good name at the bank. Surely God does not care."

Yes, friend, God cares, but He does not show his care in quite that way. He cares so much that He rewards those who serve Him with the very best. But you are making a mistake about the best. Is it houses and lands? Is it fame and position? Is it a

dearth of doctor's bills? Evidently something is wrong if God's best is any of these. Shall God bless virtue with successful investments? Shall He reward piety with horses and carriages? Shall He compensate purity with silver money? Blessed are the pure in heart, for every one of them shall have a hundred thousand dollars—is that what Jesus said? Is it after this fashion that God will reward the good? Will He balance thus the earthly against the spiritual, and pay for one in terms of the other?

Never, in any world. The work itself is the wages for those who work for God. The life itself is the blessing which God gives to those who live it. To be good is the reward of goodness. To be honest is the reward of honesty. The pure in heart shall see God; that is the divine best, to see Him, to be blessedly aware of the divine approbation, to love God and to be consciously near to Him. From this, what can poverty take away or wealth add? To gain this, what pain is not worth while?

Thus we read that strange paradox, "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth." That puts pain and love together. God, who knows what is best for us, while we know not, has ordered this great universe aright. Science

itself, which but a few years ago had no words too hard to say about the divine mismanagement of things, speaks now by the lips of its foremost prophet in this country to assure us that "though in many ways God's work is above our comprehension, yet those parts of the world's story that we can decipher warrant the belief that, while in nature there may be divine irony, there can be no such thing as wanton mockery, for through everything is discernible the deep ethical purpose. Below the surface din and clashing of the struggle for life we hear the undertone of the deep ethical purpose as it rolls in solemn music through the ages, its volume swelled by every victory, great or small, of right over wrong, till in the fulness of the time, of God's own time, it shall burst forth in the triumphant chorus of humanity redeemed and purified." And religion, looking out into the world, adds to this declaration of the wisdom and the righteousness of God, the assertion of his love. For every one of us God cares. Every soul of us the eternal Father loves.

THE GOOD OF TROUBLE.

"It is good for me that I have been in trouble."—Ps. cxix. 71.

THE man who wrote that had learned the hardest of all lessons: he had learned the lesson of pain. He had worked out the problem of human sorrow, and had got an answer—a good answer. St. Ambrose wrote a book upon the Advantage of Death, but the writer of this psalm had a theme more difficult than that—the Advantage of Life when life seems heavier to bear than death. He had found the good of trouble.

He must have been a good man. The fact that he was able to learn this lesson shows that. For trouble tests men.

Trouble enters differently into different lives. It may be the same trouble—the same disappointment, the same pain, the same parting,—but here it helps and there it hinders; of one it makes a saint, another it leaves a sinner as before; because people are different. The same rain which falls upon a lawn and makes it fresh and clean and shining, falls also upon the road near by and turns it into ugly and un-

pleasant mud ; because a road is different from a lawn.

This man had stood the test of trouble, and he has written down between the lines how bitter an experience, how stern a test it was. For, you see, when he wrote it was all over. It had lain a formidable stumbling-block across his path, and he had made a stepping-stone out of it ; but all that difficult achievement lay away back in the distance. It is good for me, he says, that I have been in trouble. He can see that now. He looks back upon it, and it is "wholly blessed in retrospect, and infinitely worth suffering." But in the moment of trouble, within the darkness of the black shadow, even he, perhaps, could see no hope and no light. It was only afterward that he read the meaning and found the blessing.

It is often best that the afflicted soul, in the closer presence of the affliction, in the supreme hour of pain, should simply abide still and wait. By and by, if we do that, if we wait, if we but hold the hand of God, without question, without utterance, patient till He speaks, we will know all that we need to know. We will learn how rejoicing waits on tribulation. This man waited and learned.

But he needed to be a good man in order to learn.

Whether trouble shall help or hinder, whether it shall speak from Ebal or from Gerizim, depends very much upon our own selves. Every trouble comes upon its own blessed mission of helpful ministry, every trial has some divine and loving purpose behind it, every sorrow has its appointed message of truth and benediction—if we can only find it; if it can only find us! He whose heart is open will learn the blessing of adversity, will know the good of trouble. God's teaching waits upon our learning. God blesses us when we are ready for God's blessing.

This man was able to learn this hard lesson because he was a good man. Fortunately, however, he was not so immaculately good that we have need to be discouraged. He was good in this sense of that wide word: he had the grace of open-heartedness. As for the rest, he was no better than we are. He had been disobeying God's commandments when trouble came to stop him. To him that was the great good of trouble. Grief and pain had stood before him in the middle of a path which led to sure disaster, and he was profoundly grateful for that intervention. "It is good for me that I have been in trouble—that I may learn thy statutes." And again, in another place, he says: "Before I was troubled I went wrong, but now

have I kept thy word." That, to him, was what trouble was for, it was for teaching.

Trouble is a grim schoolmaster, but it teaches some essential lessons: the lesson of strength, the lesson of law, the lesson of faith, the lesson of love.

Every trouble is an opportunity to win the grace of strength. Whatever else trouble is in the world for, it is here for this good purpose: to develop strength. For a trouble is a moral and spiritual task. It is something which is hard to do. And it is in the spiritual world as in the physical, strength is increased by encounter with the difficult. A world without any trouble in it, would be, to people of our kind, a place of spiritual enervation and moral laziness. Fortunately, every day is crowded with care. Every day to every one of us brings its questions, its worries, and its tasks, brings its sufficiency of trouble. Thus we get our daily spiritual exercise. Every day we are blessed with new opportunities for the development of strength of soul.

That is what the common troubles of our lives mean. They are to be taken for tasks. Here is a great rock which you will get out of the road—pulling and pushing at it, clearing the king's highway and training your spiritual muscles at the same time. Here is a slough of

despond ; to right or left is nothing which attracts you, interests or helps you ; you are set down in the middle of this monotonous marsh ; drain it, make the waste place arable, plant it with flowers and corn ; it is your task, it is your chance to win the crown which is laid up for him that overcometh.

Trouble teaches also the lesson of law. We live in a world of law. God, who cares for each individual of us, knows that the very best government for this universe and this race is a government of great, universal laws. We have happiness in this life and in the life to come just in proportion as we live in obedience to these laws of God.

We must learn, then, what God's laws are. This knowledge we get partly by revelation and partly by experience, and that which we learn from revelation needs the emphasis of experience before we actually realize the force of it. Practically, then, the teacher who is charged with this department in the common schools of God is trouble. We discover the difference between right and wrong in the most primitive fashion, in the manner of our first parents among the trees of the garden, by personal tasting, by experience. And the difference is made plain to us by trouble. Whenever we break a law of God, whether in

the world of nature or in the world of morals, there stands trouble to tell us, and trouble tells us in a way which we do not soon forget.

Trouble teaches us to know the bad whenever we see it. It is affixed to disobedience as pain is put in the tip of a tongue of flame to keep people away from it. It is a deterrent. Take trouble out of the world and leave love in, and it would be as if the sting were taken out of the flame while fire were left as fatally dangerous as ever: men would be without warning. Blessed be God who has set up this plain danger mark over every sin.

Take it in the world of nature. God has set in this world a law of gravitation. It is best for the world in general that this should be a universal law, and men, accordingly, are taught to recognize and remember it—by accident. Whoever loses his balance in a third-story window, whether it be a little child, or a young man asleep during an apostle's sermon, it makes no difference, down he goes. Because that is God's wise law, to which we must of necessity adjust ourselves for our own good. Trouble comes in the physical world not because God is angry; unless we are prepared to say that fire burns us because God is angry. Trouble comes not so much by the act of God as by the act of man. There is an epidemic of fever

in a city, children are taken out of their mother's arms, the widow's son dies. People used to think that it was a sign of the wrath of God. But we know better. The fever is the result of disregard of some of the beneficent sanitary laws of God. It is a sign that there is somewhere a broken law. It is an imperative call to men to find that law and keep it. The disease will assuredly go on, in spite of the sincerest prayers, until men learn to obey God.

So it is in the moral world. All disobedience of the moral law of God results sooner or later in some sort of trouble. The inference is not so plain as it is in the case of fire and flood; the penalty does not often follow so speedily, sometimes it delays so long that the offender imagines that he will have no punishment; but it comes. God does not always pay at the end of the week, somebody says, but He pays. Yes, He always pays. Every disregard of the will of God, every breach of his commandments, has its sure consequence of trouble. We have all found that out. We bring nine-tenths of our trouble upon ourselves: we must not blame God for it. And this kind of trouble, when we are honest about it, is a good thing. It ought to be. Year by year the race grows better, by reason of it. Year

by year, under the stern tuition of hard experience, we learn the wisdom of God's law.

But there are troubles which are not computed by learning either the lesson of strength or the lesson of law.

Trouble sometimes falls upon the blameless. Somebody is almost always to blame, but so closely are we knit together in the body of human society that one man's wrongdoing almost always injures others. We are taught in the Bible that trouble does not necessarily mean the sin of those who are troubled. Those eighteen on whom the tower of Siloam fell did not suffer for any sin of theirs, Christ said. Some company of worthless workmen had cemented the stones of the tower with untempered mortar: but the eighteen had no share in the offence.

When trouble comes it is well to look to see if we have broken any law, but there is no need to imagine any disobedience if we cannot find it. People sometimes make grievous mistakes in attributing their troubles to their own sins. This is especially true of the profound sorrow of bereavement. What have I done? cries the afflicted soul. What have I left undone? and often the answer is "Nothing." Especially we are not to think, as some have thought, that God parts people on account of

the intensity of their affection. We are not to think that God ever takes away little children as a jealous rebuke to the mother's tender love. Never! Never did the Father in heaven do that. He who made us with the power to love, He who gave us those we loved, gave that love to be employed in loving, gave those dear ones to be loved. You cannot love your friend or your child too much. God will never punish anybody's genuine love. We may be sure of that. Whatever stern lessons trouble has to teach, that is not one of them.

But troubles come, and we have done no sin. Why, then, does trouble come? We weary and perplex ourselves trying to answer. Here is the place for faith. Here let us trust the wise and loving heart of the Father in heaven. Trouble comes, and we cannot defend ourselves. It passes, and leaves us sad, and blank of understanding. But God knows all about it. Close beside us is the divine Father. In his sight all that seems to us confused and contradictory is plain. He is taking care of this world and of everybody in it. He is taking care of us, and the wisest and the tenderest care. Have faith in Him for that. We are in trouble; somehow it is good for us; He knows how. If we trust Him, He will guide us safely. Over the hard places we will go

and never lose the way, holding his strong hand.

Does it make a very great demand on faith to put such trust in God as that?

You know what the word "tribulation" means: you know how it comes from the name of the flail which in the old Latin times parted the chaff from the wheat. Is it very hard to see the fitness of the word? Is it difficult to perceive this grim servant of God busy in his necessary work, actually getting this essential separation effected in human lives? We can see the good of trouble, we can see the blessed ministry of tribulation, every day.

Here is one who is careless and foolish, superficial, touching only the surface of things, busied with lower and material concerns, taken up with that which is merely transitory. If in the midst of such a life, pain comes, and grief and the hard burden of responsibility, and the trouble makes the current of life stronger and deeper, and the soul is made aware of the presence of the living and loving God—how plain it is, in such a case, what trouble means. What a clear comment and interpretation of the hard text: "Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth." Here is love working through trouble, inspiring, uplifting, making the man a

new man. We see how trouble may mean character. And if we cannot see this in our own case, we may reflect that this troubled soul of whom we speak cannot see it in his case either, just at this moment. But the helpful influence is there, actually influencing and helping. By and by, if we keep faith, we will discover the good of trouble, and every trouble thus translated into blessing will give us stronger trust in God to meet the next.

These lessons, then, are taught by trouble—the lesson of strength, the lesson of law, the lesson of faith, and one other, the lesson of love.

In a world without any sorrow in it, if we as at present constituted were put into such a tearless world, how much love would go out with the departure of grief. Sorrow brings people very close together.

And sorrow not only creates the need of sympathy, but it makes the gracious ministry of sympathy possible. They who have never been touched by trouble have no power of sympathy. Only one who has been in the darkness of sorrow can enter into the darkness of another's sorrows. We who have stood in need of comfort can comfort others as we have been comforted. Trouble thus puts new possibility and power into human life. You

have a word to say which no untroubled soul can speak. You can do good now, and go on missions of consolation, and help people, as you never could before. Sorrow is sometimes an excuse for selfishness. People go apart and separate themselves from the world's life, and think sad thoughts. And they wonder why they find no comfort. It is because they are going in the wrong direction; they are walking toward the darkness. The other way, is light. Sorrow must be made an opportunity for service. They who comfort others shall themselves be comforted. Unto those who minister to others shall the Father Himself minister. To such as these the old words shall have new and blessed meaning, and they will be able to say, as the psalmist said, "It is good for me that I have been in trouble."

THE SECRET OF SERENITY.

"All things work together for good to them that love God."—
ROMANS viii. 28.

THUS it is that the sun shines in the soul, whether it shines in the sky or not. Thus it is that the constantly recurring paradox of the gospel is understood and verified. St. Paul knew all about it. He spoke the honest truth out of his own experience when he said, "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken": we are "sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing all things." He had learned the secret of serenity.

What is it? What is the secret of serenity? We all want to know it. Indeed, we do know it already. There is no secret about it. St. Paul speaks it out plainly enough. Everybody can see what it is. All things work together for good to them that love God. We must love God: that is the heart of it. Happiness, content and right satisfaction, all doubts answered, all problems solved, all dark places lighted up, heaven begun here,—this is the

reward of loving God. In this world, tribulation ; yes, but good cheer in spite of that, for the Son of God, whom we love, has overcome the world. Great are the troubles of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of all.

All things, indeed, are intended to work together for good to all people, whether they love God or not. For God loves us. We are all of us members of the family of God. God is our Father. Whether we deny Him or not, whether we love Him or not, whether we are good sons or prodigal sons, it makes no difference. God's love for every child of his continues unailing and unchanged. All things may work together for bad, even blessing may be perverted into malediction, and the child of God may every day get further from his Father's house, and forget God, and prefer the devil. But God waits. The bad is not of the Father's sending, but of the son's making or choosing. In the parable the father gave the son the portion of goods that fell to him ; and the money was good money. If the son had loved his father better than he loved his own bad way, all that treasure would have worked together to enrich him. But the son went wrong, and that converted every penny of his fortune into temptation, sin, misery, and forsaken poverty. But that was the son's fault.

The father waits. Sometime the son may think of home and turn back, and try if there be still a welcome for him. He will always find a welcome.

Sometimes the breeze blows in a man's face and hinders him; sometimes it blows against his back and helps him. It depends altogether upon the direction in which he walks. He must expect hindrance who sets his face against the wind.

The meaning is that the quality of life depends very much upon ourselves. The event comes and to one it brings prosperity, while to another it brings adversity, not on account of any difference in the love of God, but on account of the difference in the hearts and minds of men. Perhaps the book is not so dull after all; it may be the reader who is dull. Some other, brighter than this one, may find the book a blessing, full of inspiration. And as with books, so with all life. God cannot bless us unless we are ready and willing to be blessed. And only they who love God are ready and receptive to the best blessings of God. That is how it is that all things work together for good to them that love God.

For think who they are that really love God. They are the people of whom it is possible to say these three things truthfully: that

they try to do the will of God, and that they set the same valuation upon the interests and rewards of life that God sets, and that they are willing to wait a good while for the complete revelation of the meaning of God. So that the secret of serenity is not such a simple matter. Whoever would gain the benediction of tranquillity, and look out confident, without trembling and without repining, into the midst of all the ills of life, and live in heaven here in this uncelestial country, may have his wish, upon these three conditions.

The first condition of perfect happiness is the purpose and the persistent endeavor to do the will of God.

It is plain enough that a great proportion of all our adversities come through the open gate of disobedience. We know the will of God, well enough. It is written plain for us in the book of God, and made still plainer in the life of the Son of God. God desires us to live as close as we can to the life that Jesus Christ lived. That is the broad avenue to perfect happiness. Most of us know by experience that in proportion as we have followed Him we have found happiness. And we know by still larger experience that as we turn away from Him the world gets dark, and life ceases to be worth living.

Take, for example, such a hard lot as St. Paul had. He was poor; he was unsuccessful; he was disliked; men laid plots against him; he was persecuted even to violence, and at last to death. His life was full of all manner of hardships. He had not even the assisting strength of good health, but was sick often, knew what pain meant. Take some good Christian out of our neighborhood and set him down where St. Paul stood; let him have no money, and no home, and very few friends, and let the people of Lystra pelt him with stones, and let the magistrates at Philippi beat him with many stripes, and thrust him into the inner prison, and make his feet fast in the stocks. What a test of the genuineness of religion! What a hard proving of the secret of serenity! St. Paul actually enjoys it, delights in it, glories in it. After he comes to his senses again from the bruises of the stones, and gets his hurts a little healed, he goes straight back to Lystra and preaches that same sermon over again. In the stocks at Philippi, he and Silas sing praises unto God, so that all the people in the prison marvel,—absolutely happy! The letters of this man are full of joy and thanksgiving. He knew very well what he was talking about when he said that we ought to give thanks always and for all things. That

was the constant practice of his life. Nothing troubled him,—except his sins, and he knew that Christ died that even the chief of sinners might be forgiven. He had learned, he says, to be contented everywhere.

That is because St. Paul was trying the best he could every day to do the will of God. Everything that came into his life was a help to him toward this end. The harder the better. So much the finer opportunity to show the spirit of his Master.

A great deal of the unhappiness of life comes upon us because we disobey what Christ told us about loving other people even as He loved us. The root of it is selfishness. In proportion as we think less about our own comfort, our own convenience, our own position, our own pride, our own rights and deserts, and think more about the services we can render to our neighbor, we will find happiness, we will attain the secret of serenity. Sensitiveness, for example, which makes so much trouble for so many people, is very often only a subtle form of selfishness. It is the result of thinking too much about ourselves. It is not Christian. So long as we hold back from following Christ along the way of the cross, along that road where he who makes his pilgrimage leaves self behind, just so long we are bound to be

discontented, vexed, pained, and generally unhappy. For he who loves self a great deal loves God only a little. And all things work together for good only to them that love God.

The second condition of perfect happiness is the setting of a right value upon our possessions.

God always sympathizes in all human sorrow, but a great many times He must be sorry only because we are so foolishly sorry. The little child weeps and wails when it is thought best that he shall have no more of some sweet dish. And we see plainly enough, with our maturer wisdom that the loss is not worth half the tears. The little child has set an exaggerated value upon this taste of honey. We are little children in God's sight. And a great many times, no doubt, we are very foolish children. We grieve because God does not give us what He sees to be not best for us, or because He takes away that which is not worth even a sigh.

It is not possible for one who learns the life of Jesus Christ to believe that God cares very much whether we have a great deal of money or not, whether we live in very handsome houses or not, whether we dress in fashionable attire or not. Unless we take it as the meaning of his words and the lesson of his life that

it is better not to have great riches, except to hold them as God's stewards for the good of man, and that the less concern we take about our eating and drinking and attiring, so much the better. Certain it is that He set the kingdom of God and his righteousness distinctly first. And when we reverse that divine order, and set some lesser thing first, it is not likely that God shares very deeply in our grief if we lose it.

If we would be happy, we must unlearn foolish grief. We must value much what God values much, and set at a small price what He values little. If we could but do that, reserving our affections for those things that are above, how many adversities might befall us without disturbing our serenity.

Most of the worries of life are connected with that side of it which is of little value in the sight of God. The vexations of business, the perplexities and entanglements of house-keeping, the disappointments and bad service of employees, the cook, the clerk, the dress, the bargain, the dinner,—these suggest a great many of the lesser griefs of life. They are fertile in hindrances to happiness. But it is almost always our own fault. It is because we attach an exaggerated importance to them. After all, are they worth the worry that they

make? Would it not be better to take them as they come, deal with them as wisely and as patiently as we can, and then put them out of our minds? Some people actually die from the stings of gnats. They are worried into their graves by the petty cares of common life, whereas it is the counsel of Christ that we should not worry. He said that more than once. The Christian will make it a matter of principle not to worry.

The remedy for this sort of unhappiness is to think about great, important things, which will dwarf these trifles into insignificance. The most important of all possessions in the sight of God is character. And the foremost interest of all who are really trying to do God's will must be his kingdom and his righteousness. "There is but one thing needful," said Amiel in his Journal—"to possess God. All our senses, all our powers of mind and soul, all our external resources, are so many ways of approaching the divinity, so many modes of tasting and adoring God. We must learn to detach ourselves from all that is capable of being lost; to bind ourselves absolutely only to what is absolute and eternal, and to enjoy the rest as a loan." He who loves God, sets God first. And it is to Him that all things work together for good.

The third condition of Christian happiness is willingness to wait.

A great deal of grief springs out of misunderstanding. We do not see the meaning of our trouble. And very often we hasten to attach to it the most tragic, the most hopeless of meanings. We say to ourselves that it is now evident that God does not care. They taught us that God is our living Father, in the days before our sorrow came, and we believed it without thinking much about it. It was easy to believe it. But we know better now—or worse! God does not care. And so the sky grows black. While many times,—perhaps most times—if we would but wait, we would presently discover in our trouble only a plainer evidence of the wise love of God. God desires to lead us into richer blessings, but the path lies through hard places, and we grow too easily discouraged.

Sometimes we suffer from anticipated sorrow, which never really comes, but joy in the place of it. All that sort of sorrow would be banished out of life if we but loved God enough to trust Him, and to wait. We are like the women in the dusk of the Easter dawn, wondering as they go who will roll away the great stone from the door of the sepulchre, and probably distressing themselves greatly about it; and behold, as they approach, the stone is

rolled away! If we love God we will cast our anxious care on Him, knowing that He cares for us.

Sometimes we are not wise enough to recognize the blessing when we see it. We mistake friends for enemies. We account helps to be hindrances. That was the kind of mistake that Jacob made when bad news came from Egypt; the old man lost heart. "All these things," he cried, "are against me." Whereas all those things were for him, not against him. They were but preparations for the greatest blessings he knew how to pray for. They were manifestations of the watchful and abiding love of God.

The truth is that human life is like a novel of which we know the end. Before we get far along in it we are told how it comes out. It comes out right at the last for all who love God. That makes the novel easier to read. It makes life easier to live. Yes, there are complications enough, and burdens hard to bear, and obstacles high as mountains across the path, and all things seem to be going wrong, nothing is right. But wait. In due time we shall see. For we have looked into the last chapter, and it is written there that all things, even the hardest things, work together for good to them that love God.

He who loves God trusts Him. He realizes that God knows more than he does. He learns that God works gradually, and is never in a hurry, and step by step brings blessing out of what seems malediction. And he is content to wait. He tarries patiently and trustfully for dawn. The night grows blacker and blacker. Our great grief shuts out all the light of heaven. Even the face of God is lost to sight. God seems to have forsaken us. We cannot see our way. All this tragedy into whose black depths we fall seems so insoluble, so mysterious. We cannot find a reason for it. Why did it come? What does it mean? There is not a ray of light in the darkness.

What then? What shall we do? In this dread confusion, in this loss of all that we love most, in this tragic defeat and overthrow of life, how can we keep happiness? By keeping faith; by looking forward to the dawn. Sometime the light will shine again, all shadows flee away, all tears change into tears of joy, all questions have satisfying answers, all things work together for good—if we love God. That blessed solution and explanation of the tragic mysteries of life may come soon, or it may come late. We may learn it here, or we may not learn it till the light of the life

to come shines in our faces. We must be content to wait. This is God's world. Our Father is the ruler of it, and loves us. God has his wise and loving meaning in all that happens to us. We must wait and trust his love.

THE BEGINNING OF THE HOLY WEEK.

"Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and all the things that are written by the prophets shall be accomplished unto the Son of man. For He shall be delivered up unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and shamefully entreated, and spit upon; and they shall scourge and kill Him; and the third day He shall rise again."—ST. LUKE xviii. 31, 23.

THE apostles did not believe it. They believed that Jesus spoke the truth, but they thought that it was only another of those dark sayings which seemed to mean one thing on the surface and quite another thing under the surface. What it did mean, they knew not. But that Jesus was actually and literally to be delivered up unto the Gentiles, and to be mocked and shamefully entreated and spit upon and scourged and killed,—that was quite out of the question. As for rising again on the third day, they did not attempt to understand that.

They stood there together on the road that led to Jerusalem, and Jesus told them the outline of the story of Holy Week before it came to pass. And the next thing we hear is that there arose a dispute among them as to which

of them should be the greatest; the greatest, that is, in that wonderful kingdom of heaven which the Master was always talking about, and in which He would be the King and they his ministers. They had a stout discussion as to which of them should sit on the right hand and which on the left in that coming kingdom.

The apostles were thinking of themselves. They were so interested in their own ambitions, in their own plans for advancement, that they did not understand what Jesus said. They looked ahead toward Holy Week with blind eyes, not recognizing what it meant.

Now it is Holy Week again. The anniversary of those days of pain comes again into the Christian calendar. Where the apostles looked forward, we look back. What they saw but dimly in the near future, we see clearly in the long past. And yet I am afraid that we enter into the memories of this tragic season, as the apostles entered into its hours and events, without realization, thinking more of ourselves than of our Saviour.

It was all so long ago, and we know the story so familiarly, that it fails to touch us, unless we are very careful to keep our hearts open and receptive to it. It did happen. And that which happened was for our own sake, really affects us here and to-day, makes a differ-

ence in this world as well as in the world to come. Somehow, after the hero has won the victory, and gained life for his country and death for himself at the same time, there is jubilation and gratitude for a little while ; and the pulses of the young beat faster when they think of the brave fight he made, and the eyes of the strong and of the loving grow tender when they remember the pain he bore. And the year after there is an enthusiastic remembrance made of him, and everybody is telling how he saved our liberties and lives. He kept the bridge till we got it burned behind him, and so the enemy was held back from the city ; or he rushed out into the face of the hostile army in the moment when the charge was made, and gathered in his arms a sheaf of spears, and so broke a way for us to follow through to victory ; some brave deed he did in which he lost his life and gave us ours. And we love him for it.

But the year after, the enthusiasm chills a little. By and by the anniversary comes to be little more than a holiday in which we take our pleasure. One generation only has passed in our own land since the Civil War, and the friends and the relatives of the brave men who gave their hearts to the cause of our national existence, and fell on battlefields fight-

ing for us, are still alive ; and already the day which was set apart for the decoration of their graves has begun to lose its meaning. That, I suppose, is human nature,—to forget, to enjoy what has been gained for us at the cost of our brother's life and not to think much about our brother.

It is not, then, to be wondered at, seeing that it was so very long ago, and the story is such a very old one, that Holy Week should not mean very much to many people. The anniversary is still observed. There are palms in church to-day to remind us of that Sunday when there were palms cast at our hero's feet as He rode into Jerusalem. And there are more services this week than usual, especially on the memorial day of his hanging on the cross for us, and dying there in the darkness, forsaken by all men, fighting his great fight alone. Yet it must not be expected that we will do very much thinking, that our hearts will beat much faster, or that there will be tears in the eyes of many people.

True it is that we owe to Jesus Christ all that is good about us and within us. The devil was getting the whole world into his power when Jesus came. He had already driven both religion and decent living out of the largest part of the Roman empire. Right-

eousness was everywhere getting the worst of it. And then Christ came, and fought that great fight of his, with the cross in the midst of it, and by his pain got victory in our battle. And so the world began over again, and has gone on from that day growing all the time to be a better world. The world in which we live,—all that is good in it,—is the work of Jesus Christ.

And, beside that, there opens out that other world to which this is but the vestibule. That was an undiscovered world till Jesus came. A good many people thought that there might perhaps be another land on the other side of the black water. Human souls were all the time launching out alone into that deep with dread, leaving disconsolate friends behind, and never coming back again. The only sort of comfort was a hope or a guess that there was a land of light over there somewhere. But there was no certainty. And the whole world was full of sadness. It is said that even yet the songs of all pagan nations are in the minor key. And then came Holy Week, and Jesus suffered death. He too set out alone over the black water. Nobody dreamed that He would come back again. But back He came, bringing the news which still makes the anniversary a day of anthems and alleluias. All the real

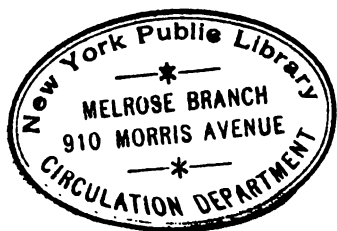
joy we have, all the confidence with which we face the inevitable fact of death, all the consolation that gives us comfort in the hour of separation, we get from Jesus Christ. All that is best in human life to-day dates back to Holy Week.

Forgetfulness of benefits is not a trait of which we may be proud. But we do remember our hero and our Saviour. We call ourselves Christians to show that we are his disciples. We have our churches, and our prayers, and our gospels, and we do think of Him, and read about Him, and his life does influence our lives, and we are grateful to Him for what He has done and still does for us, and we love Him.

Yes, but not enough. So did the apostles love Him, who yet were so intent upon their own ambitions, that they listened to what He said about his pain and death, paying little heed. We need to love Him a great deal more than we do. Personal loyalty and allegiance to Him is the very heart of our Christian religion. In the deepest sense Christianity is nothing else but love for Jesus Christ. And the more we realize what He has done for us, the better we will love Him. That is where such anniversaries as these are helpful. They lead us into realization.

Let us go back across the seas and the centuries. We are in Jerusalem. And Jerusalem is crowded with people. For the Feast of the Passover is near at hand. Every house is full of guests; all the country villages are thronged with visitors; even the fields are white with the tents of the pilgrims. And around about, among these crowds of people is passing a question without an answer. Everybody is discussing it, and wondering about it.—Is the Prophet of Nazareth here? Will He venture to be present at the Passover? Everybody knew about Him. Many had seen Him walking in their streets; many could tell of words that He had said, of miracles that He had done, of sick people on whom his hands had rested in healing benediction. In Jerusalem this morning, and in all the country round about, there is much wondering talk of Jesus of Nazareth.

Last night, some say, He was at Bethany, and sat at supper there in Simon's house; and Lazarus was with Him; and Mary poured precious ointment over his feet, and wiped them with the tresses of her hair; and Judas, one of the twelve, complained about it. Better to have taken the price of the ointment and to have spent it for the poor. Judas, it is likely, was not the only one who said that. Day by day,



for weeks and months, the cause of the Prophet of Nazareth has been losing ground. Little by little, He has been losing his hold upon the people. One after another they who have called themselves his friends have turned their backs upon Him and forsaken Him. The great people, in the church and in the state, the clergy, the wealthy and influential laity, have been against Him all along. And these last months the hatred and the number of his enemies have increased together. Especially in Jerusalem. In Galilee, and in the country generally, some enthusiasm lingers. And the apostles are still faithful. But all the power of the land stands in opposition. And the end is certain. Will He venture into the presence of his open enemies? Will He attend the Passover? He is over there in Bethany, across the Kedron bridge, on the other side of the summit of the Mount of Olives. Will He come nearer?

At last, in the middle of the morning, there is a rumor. Certain have hurried down the slope of Olivet, and over the bridge into the city, and brought word that the Prophet of Nazareth is coming, indeed, and is coming to-day. He has already started on his journey to the city. Early this morning He sent two of his disciples to a village near to Bethany, and told them that at a certain corner they

would find an ass's colt tied. And when they began to unloose the colt, and the owner stopped them, they answered, It is for the Master. Everybody knew who that was. The village had its share of Passover pilgrims, and they had been asking at that very corner, standing there and talking, Will the Master go? And they all knew what that meant. The question was answered now. Probably some started straight from that village street corner, and hastened into the city with the news. And so we hear it, down here in the city, and we go out to meet Him. And presently there is a sound of voices and of tramping feet, and there come around a corner of the hill the company of Bethany pilgrims, and people from all the mountain-side; and the apostles, and amidst them, riding on the ass's colt, the Master. And we all begin to shout at the sight of Him, and to greet Him with acclamations, and we tell each other where we have seen Him before and what we have seen Him do and have heard Him say, and we cast our long cloaks in the dust of the road to make a royal carpet for Him, and we pull down branches from the palm trees and wave them in the air, and fling them at his feet, and we are all singing, with all our hearts and all our voices, the pilgrim welcome: "Hosanna

to the Son of David! Blessed be He that cometh in the name of the Lord. . . . Blessed the kingdom that cometh, the kingdom of our father David! . . . Blessed be He that cometh in the name of the Lord. . . . Hosanna . . . Hosanna in the highest. . . . Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" The words are familiar words. They are sounding, these Passover days, along all the roads which lead into Jerusalem, greeting the pilgrim companies. But somehow we sing them with a new emphasis and a new meaning, so that certain Pharisees among us, cry out in anger against the enthusiasm of our welcome, saying, one to another, "Perceive ye how ye prevail nothing? Behold, the world is gone after Him." And they appeal to Christ Himself—"Master, rebuke thy disciples." To which the Prophet of Nazareth answers, breaking his silence, "I tell you that if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out."

On moves the great procession, some behind and some before, some friends and some enemies, and the point is reached where of a sudden there is a break in the wall of rock, and beyond, across the deep valley, the whole magnificent city stands in view.

"Throned on her rock, crowned with the great white Dome,
And girt with Kedron and the guardian hills."

There lies the holy city in her glory, the city of palaces, terrace upon terrace, with burnished roofs shining in the sunlight. There stands the splendid temple,

“ Its nine gates laid with gold ; its corner-stones
Rose-red, and white and black, fetched from afar,
For Israel's God, each block and desert crag
Sculptured to beauty ; and the golden grapes
Over the golden doors, each shining bunch
The stature of a man, its cedar work,
Its alabaster stairs.”

How different Christ's sight from ours ! At a city, at a man, how different his look, how different his estimation from our foolish judgments ! How many rich are poor, how many high are as nothing, how much of which we pride ourselves is worse than nothing, in his divine valuation. Jesus looks at Jerusalem, and we look too out of our foolish eyes. The whole procession pauses at the sudden and splendid spectacle. But He weeps. The tears come into his eyes ; there is a cry of lamentation on his lips. He sees the future with the present. He hears the shouts of the besieging army. He beholds the ruin of the splendid city, and the demolition of the sacred temple. “ If thou hadst known,” He cries, “ even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace ! But now they are hid

from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children within thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knowest not the time of thy visitation."

Is there, then, a last chance, and no more chance after it? a final opportunity to know the truth, to recognize the Master, to realize the visitation of God, to heed the call of God—after that, no knowledge, no recognition, no call, no chance? Can there be sometime a sermon for a man which the man may turn away from, and turn away from the Father in heaven at the same time, and never turn back again, only silence in his soul after that, and judgment to come?

Down goes the great procession into the city—past Gethsemane, across the bridge of Kedron, through the gates, along the streets. Everybody crowds to see. All the windows are full of lookers. All the city is moved. And men say, Who is this? And we answer, not so bold as we were out on the mountain, abating already in this curious and unsympathizing presence a little of our warm enthusiasm, "This is Jesus the Prophet of Naz-

areth of Galilee." We were thinking, some of us, on the slope of Olivet of that verse in Zechariah, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, thy King cometh unto thee; He is just and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass. . . . And He shall speak peace unto the heathen, and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth." That was in our minds out on the road, with no hostile crowd about us. "Blessed," we cried, "is He that cometh in the name of the Lord." And we thought of the Messiah, we thought of the great King of Peace, the Saviour. But we do not say anything about that now. "This is the Prophet of Nazareth of Galilee." That is a safe speech. Nobody will dispute that. And Jesus listens. And again He looks ahead, not very far, to a day when some of us who are hoarse with our shouts of acclamation shall be crying, "Crucify Him." There is a great picture in Venice, a picture of the crucifixion, wherein behind the cross the ass's colt is feeding on a pile of withered palm leaves!

Jesus enters into the temple, and looks round about. The traders are busy with their dove-selling and their money-changing. The sacred

courts are profaned with the noise of traffic. The place of prayer is a den of thieves. But to-day Jesus lifts no hand and speaks no word. He looks, and goes away. What a significant look. So looks God down upon this earth to-day, seeing us all, missing not a sinner of us, nor a sin. And the thieves go on stealing, and the liars go on lying, and the cruel are cruel, and the unclean are unclean, and to-day God lifts no hand. He only looks. To-morrow comes the judgment.

And Jesus goes back again to Bethany, the twelve with Him, and the shadows of evening close in about them, and the great olive trees of Gethsemane are black across the path. And the first day of the Holy Week is ended.

THE FACT OF THE RESURRECTION.

"He rose again the third day."—I COR. xv. 4.

SOMETHING had happened. That is evident. The ministry of Jesus of Nazareth, whom some men called the Christ, had ended in tragic failure. The "King of the Jews" had died the death of a criminal. Amid the rejoicings and revilings of his enemies, condemned by the leaders of the people both civil and religious, convicted by the state of sedition, and by the church of blasphemy, betrayed by one of his own intimate disciples, denied by another, and forsaken by them all, Jesus of Nazareth had ended his life upon the ignominious cross.

Night fell on Calvary, and the black shadow of despair fell on the hearts of all who had loved the Galilean teacher. When the sun rose on Easter morning, it lighted not a single Christian anywhere. The Christian party, so far as it had strength enough to deserve the name of party, had been broken up. The Christian movement had come to nothing. There was not in the heart of any, the most zealous, disciple so much as a glimmer of a hope

that that good work would now go on. Jesus had, indeed, spoken words of encouragement; He had assured them of an abiding presence and of a triumph over all the world, and of a rising again out of the grave by which that presence and that triumph should begin. But they had listened without understanding. In the garden of Gethsemane they had forgotten everything, and after the crucifixion a memory of the promise seems to have been kept only by their enemies. The cross had cancelled hope. Jesus was dead, and with Him all anticipation had perished. They whose faith had been the strongest and their love the deepest were going out with myrrh and spices to embalm the dead body of the defeated leader of a lost cause.

Between the two great feasts of Passover and Pentecost something evidently happened which somehow translated tragedy into triumph and transformed cowards into heroes. The men who had forsaken their Master and left Him to his fate, fleeing for their lives, and who for ten days after dared not meet even in the upper room of a private house without an anxious shutting-to of doors and windows, and making fast of bolts and bars—here they stand in the face of the multitude, confronting hostility and persecution, confident, unflinching,

altogether changed. He whom the question of the high priest's maidservant had thrown into cowardly confusion is now their spokesman. The high priest himself, with all the scribes and Pharisees behind him, cannot intimidate him. Beside him are a hundred Christians. Before the sun sets their number is three thousand. And henceforth no strength of church authority nor weight of popular prejudice, nor unbelief, nor hatred, nor abuse of enemies, nor threat of punishment, nor acquaintance with the inner prison and the stocks, nor sting of whips, nor certainty of painful death, breaks their brave front. Somehow the cross has touched their hearts with courage, darkness has been turned into marvelous light and failure into victory; somehow a great and wonderful, almost incredible, change has come upon the character of Christ's disciples. Something has happened. That is evident.

Something happened after the darkness fell upon the Friday of that tragic week.

Something happened which originated the festival of Easter. Here is a day which has been kept by Christians year by year so many centuries back that no one knows when it began. Already before the year 200, less than a century after the death of the last of the

twelve apostles, there is a wide-spread discussion between the east and the west over the date on which this festival should be observed—whether it should be kept upon a week-day or a Sunday. But there is no discussion as to keeping Easter. The day is already a part of common, immemorial custom. All Christians everywhere are keeping not only an anniversary of the tragedy of the cross, but, immediately after an anniversary of triumph, a day of jubilation. Why?

Something happened which hallowed Sunday. Here is a plain commandment broken, kept indeed in spirit but no more in letter. In the face of Old Testament legislation, contradicting the clear word of Holy Scripture, and in spite of ancient, tenacious, uninterrupted and amazingly vigorous tradition, there arises a movement in the heart of Judea itself whereby this sacred day is given up and another day is hallowed in its stead. The fact is one which demands explanation. If in our own time a company of people, gradually becoming a majority, should abandon the observance of Sunday and should choose and presently establish Wednesday as the weekly day of rest and worship, the future historian would properly consider it his duty to examine the matter and give his readers an account of it. Such a

change cannot come about by chance. Such a supposition, however, does but faintly represent the situation. The Jews revered the Sabbath to a degree which challenges belief. There were times in their wars when regiment after regiment of Jewish soldiers stood like unresisting cattle to be butchered in their ranks rather than, by drawing sword, to profane the last day of the week. Something changed that day. Something happened which zealous Jews accounted as of greater consequence than the release of their nation out of Egyptian bondage, and more worthy of commemoration than even the divine creation of the world, something so clearly revealing a new truth concerning God that no commandment,—no, not one of the supreme ten—could stand in the way of it. To this new truth all former truths gave preference. Suddenly, among these Jews men begin to keep the first day, instead of the last day, of the week. Something happened to bring about that change. What happened?

Something happened which brought the name of "Christian" into history. If Christ died upon the cross, and that was the end of it; if his failing ministry met there and then its fitting and permanent defeat; if somewhere to-day beneath the Syrian sky the bones of a

disappointed teacher lie in a dishonored grave, who can give an explanation? Who can show how Christianity survived the cross? Who can interpret the beginning of the Christian church?

Careful and painstaking scholars, pouring over dusty manuscripts of the long past, and puzzling out the syllables of battered inscriptions, might discover that there arose once in a remote Mediterranean province, some centuries ago, a teacher who lived a short, self-sacrificing and quite unappreciated life; spoke some sentences about man's duty which are really worth remembering; made some guesses about a Father in heaven and a life beyond the grave which nobody can either prove or disprove, but which all people may well wish were true; set forth some socialistic schemes and taught some democratic and dangerous doctrines which naturally and properly alarmed the ecclesiastical and political conservation of his day; and finally fell into a sad fanaticism, imagining himself the Messiah promised by the old prophets, and then lapsed into a singular mad blasphemy, declaring that they who saw him saw the eternal God, and ended his remarkable and unfortunate career upon a Roman cross. Is it likely that anything more than that would have survived? Is it likely that in that big-

oted and unappreciative time, in that obscure corner of the empire, in a day of scanty records, this career of failure, of great promise suddenly silenced without tangible accomplishment, would have won even such extended mention? I doubt if it had got itself recorded in so many as seven short sentences.

We speak of the beauty of the life of Jesus. We read there a moral miracle which puts all other miracles into the far background. Sometimes we find a sufficient testimony to the divinity of Christ in that ideal life. And all that is good and true. But how do we know the story of that life? What was it which awakened that company of Jewish fishermen and peasants, without much natural appreciation, unimaginative, not philosophers nor idealists nor even saints nor poets, to the splendor and the charm of that fine and beautiful life which, while they lived in the sight and sound and presence of it, they were forever misunderstanding? How came they thus to write their records? The answer lies plainly in some fact which followed the apparent failure of the life of Jesus, which took place after the death upon the cross.

Nothing can be plainer than that something happened. The immediate and amazing change in the conduct of the disciples shows it; the in-

stitution of the festival of Easter shows it; the abandonment of the sacred day of a nation and a religion, and the adoption of another shows it; the fact that the Christian church exists at all is absolutely without explanation and cannot be rationally accounted for unless after the death of Jesus something happened.

What was it, then, that happened?

Perhaps He did not really die, but somehow survived the cross and the spear, and only seemed to be dead, coming presently into consciousness again. It is not likely, however, that Roman executioners, trained and experienced in their tragic tasks, would have permitted such escape from death. They knew their business better than that. We are informed in detail that finding Jesus dead they made sure by piercing his side with a spear, and thereout came blood and water showing that the spear had pierced his heart. But suppose that the impossible had taken place, and that Jesus after the scourging, and the nailing of his hands and feet, and the agony of the cross, and the piercing of his side, had yet survived; it is plain enough that such a maimed and invalid Messiah, creeping wearily and painfully about, hiding from his enemies, and by and by dying the common death of men,—it is plain that such a risen Christ could have

inspired no joy, no faith, no new life such as we see in the disciples, no sense of triumph. The Easter alleluias never began thus. That would have been the end rather than the beginning, a disappointment and a tragedy more bitter than the cross. That would have awakened pity ; it would have brought no possible hope or happiness to any heart. Something happened, but not that.

The third day He rose again from the dead. That is what happened.

But perhaps the disciples invented that strange story and deceived the world. No ; we are acquainted with the disciples. We know what sort of men they were before Good Friday and what kind of lives they lived thereafter. Nothing can be plainer than that they were simple, honest men. Nothing can be plainer than that they had no interested motive, such as is essential to deceit. They had naught to gain. To gain ? What did they get but hostility and adversity and poverty and persecution and scourging and imprisonment and death at last ! And on they went in the face of every loss and every peril, declaring and maintaining that Jesus who had died upon the cross, came marvelously and gloriously and divinely to life again. Something happened : but it was not a lie.

Perhaps, then, it was a delusion: the disciples dreamed a dream, or saw a vision. But remember that the announcement of the resurrection was made in the very city where Jesus had been crucified and buried, and to the very people who had seen Him die and had brought Him to his death. It would have been easy to disprove a delusion. That the disciples were themselves deluders we have seen to be impossible: the stealing of the dead body and the declaration that Jesus had risen from the grave are in natural and inevitable contradiction to the change in the disciples and to the consequences which follow. If, then, they were deluded, there was the body of Jesus as an unanswerable argument against them. There were Pharisees and Sadducees with all their theological and ecclesiastical and political and financial interests demanding that the delusion be exposed. Every impulse which led the Jews to bring Christ to the cross tended also with increased emphasis to impel them to put down this perilous deceit. But they have no hostile facts to go upon. They say at first that the disciples stole the body, but they do not repeat the idle story. Thereafter they have no argument but violence.

Remember also that there was in the minds of the disciples no predisposing anticipation.

They expected nothing. Men have seen visions, but they have been commonly in the attitude of expectation. These men had abandoned hope. All the records make that absolutely clear. The women who first saw the risen Lord had gone out to the tomb with myrrh and spices to embalm his dead body. When they saw that the stone was rolled away from the door of the sepulchre, there was not a thought in their hearts that that meant anything good: it meant that the Jews had come and stolen the body. And when the women saw Him and brought word to the apostles they accounted the whole matter to be an idle tale; it lighted not the faintest ray of hope within their hearts. Their minds were as empty as the tomb. And in the afternoon when the risen Lord appears to the two going out to Emmaus, He finds them mourning and weeping: they have heard the story of the women but they do not account it of sufficient importance to wait till it is examined. They are going home, saying we trusted that He should have delivered Israel, but He is dead, and that is the end of everything. And Thomas will not take the word of the whole company. They declare that they have seen Him risen and alive forevermore, but Thomas cannot believe them. It is to these incredulous

lous folk that the truth of Easter comes. They did not see a vision: that is evident. They were not in a condition of mind to see visions.

And if it be suggested that while they did not see a vision, while the sight of the risen Lord was plainly not a subjective appearance wholly in their eyes and fancy, yet He may have appeared only in a spiritual way, coming to them in that borderland between the seen and the unseen and between the body and the spirit, of which we catch faint glimpses in our own time and concerning which we hope presently to have some scientific knowledge; if that be said, and thus a spiritual resurrection be allowed and nothing more, then we must remember the circumstances under which the risen Lord appeared. He was seen during a space of more than a month: in various places and under various conditions, now in the garden by the tomb, now on the road to Emmaus, and sitting at the supper table of the two disciples, now in the upper room, where He invites the disciples to assure themselves by the testimony of their own hands that He was flesh and bone, and joins in their meal of fish and honeycomb, now on a mountain-side and again by the lake in Galilee. He is held by the feet in adoration; He walks and talks

with the disciples, saying words which remain to-day, and which affected their lives profoundly and affect us still ; He is with them not as a spirit, but in the old familiar, friendly fashion, so that they gather about Him as in the former days ; He is their Master, with nail-marks in his hands and feet, and a spear-mark in his side, the symbols of his unutterable love.

There is, indeed, a change. The body which is raised exists under new conditions. He comes and goes, though the doors be fast. Sometimes, they fail at first to recognize Him, though this is either at a distance as on the mountain, or in the mists of the early morning as beside the lake, or in the case of those who may not have known Him well, like the men of Emmaus. Plainly, there is a change. The natural body which was laid in the grave has come forth a spiritual body ; but not a body made of spirit, which is impossible, rather a body adapted to the uses of the spirit. There is a mystery here, a necessary and inevitable mystery, for the resurrection body is beyond all our experience. But it is plain from the records of the Great Event that the disciples did not see a spirit. That is not what happened. They saw Jesus, coming from the empty tomb.

No ; it was no delusion. The place and time in which the fact is first proclaimed forbid it ;

the slowness of faith of the disciples forbids it; the circumstances under which the risen Lord appears forbid it.

Yet something happened. That is beyond question. Something must have happened. And if it is impossible that that which happened was an escape from death by a survival of the cross, or a lie told by the disciples, or a delusion into which they fell; if these three suppositions contradict human nature, and are at variance with history, and are inadequate to account for the stupendous events which somehow came to pass after our Lord's death, and leave the existence of Christianity without explanation, what shall we say, then? What did happen?

Why, manifestly this which we commemorate to-day with joy and gratitude, this which makes the festival of Easter a time of jubilation, this which assures us that Jesus Christ has conquered death, and opened unto us the gate of everlasting life. The third day He rose again from the dead, and is alive forevermore.

THE ABOLITION OF DEATH.

"Our Saviour, Jesus Christ, hath abolished death."—2 TIMOTHY i. 10.

SUPPOSE that there were a king strong enough to do that. Suppose that on a certain day this strong king should abolish death. Hither and thither, over all the long roads of the kingdom, ride the royal messengers shouting out the king's decree in the ears of all the wayfarers, and at the doors of all the farmhouses, and in the market squares of all the country towns: "The king hath abolished death!" And in all the cities of the kingdom the royal servants are posting up great printed placards, bearing the king's decree, at all the street corners: "The great king hath abolished death!"

What a jubilation! What a blaze of bonfires, and blare of trumpets, and concourse of delighted people! What a sight of sweet flowers crowning the statues of the gracious King! What a sound of celestial music chanting his praises! Every home would be filled with joy undreamed of. No more dread of the dark future, no more haunting shadow fol-

lowing the light of love, no more separation, no more death! Turn the vacant cemeteries into pleasure gardens! Burn the black emblems of old sorrow in the fires of thanksgiving. Abolition of slavery would be nothing beside this—the abolition of death.

Our Saviour, Jesus Christ, our King, hath abolished death. No wonder that we keep the anniversary of that decree with joy and gladness, with anthems and alleluias; and the palaces of our King in every street are bright with flowers, and crowded with rejoicing people. This is the Easter meaning and the Easter message. We celebrate the abolition of death.

But what is this, then, that we read in the papers, this list of people who have died? How is it that death, thus abolished, still keeps on? For there seems no end to death. The resurrection of Jesus Christ has made no difference in the cemeteries. Death's triumphal processions move along the streets of Christian cities. It does not look much as though death has been defeated. "Thanks be to God," we say, "which giveth us the victory." But we say the words more with our lips, sometimes, than with our hearts. Because it looks as if death had the victory. The army of death seems the ever-victorious army.

Death makes tragic visitations all along the streets, going in sometime at every gate, and hanging his black flag of triumph beside the doors of all our houses. It does not look much as if death had been abolished.

But perhaps it is spiritual death that has been abolished. What is that? Spiritual death is sin come to its final consequence. It is the wages of sin. It is the working out in the soul of that law which, pain teaches us, holds in the body. Neglect your body and it will die. Neglect your soul and it will die. Abuse your body or your soul, and it will die.

Is spiritual death abolished? Can we now sin and get no wages for it? God forbid. The one absolutely inevitable fact in life is wages. God pays—every smallest penny of the wages of sin to every meanest sinner.

Or do we sin no longer? That, indeed, would be an elixir of life immortal. The soul that sinneth, it shall die. But the soul of the righteous shall live on, growing always into wider and richer life, to all eternity. That would be a way to achieve the abolition of death. But there is no use thinking about that.

Death of body, death of soul, goes on to-day, the whole world over. All the anthems of Easter cannot drown the weeping of the mourn-

ers. All the prayers and praises cannot hide the sound of the curses of the wicked. We may be as jubilant as we can to-day. We may celebrate the abolition of death with all the gladness we can bring to the occasion. Yet, back of all, who has not a dreadful feeling in his heart that, notwithstanding the decree, death has refused to be abolished?

Is the decree, then, only potential, only the beginning of the war? And are we so glad about it because we know that death, in spite of all his daily triumphs, is sure to be defeated at the end? "I saw Satan as lightning fall from heaven!" What a vision that was! That was better even than the abolition of death. It was the abolition of all that is wrong in human life. No more temptation, no more injustice, no more vicious inclination, no more inhumanity of man to man, no more sin in the world! That would rob even death of its worst terror. For the sting of death is sin. Down falls the great adversary headlong over the crystal battlements. It is the abolition of the devil.

And yet the devil keeps right on. That was a descent, it would seem, and not a fall. That was Satan coming down here to superintend in person the great campaign of the bad against the good.

What did Jesus mean? Why, He meant that He saw the end in the beginning. The little company of the disciples came back and told how they had converted souls, and helped men out of darkness into light, and Christ looked on ahead into the future, even on beyond our day, and saw what that small beginning would grow into, how the whole world would one day become the kingdom of God and of his Christ, and Satan would at last be worsted. Jesus rejoiced in that small victory because He beheld in it the glories of a hundred thousand splendid battlefields. He saw in it the abolition of the devil.

This, I think, is what is meant by the abolition of death so far as it concerns death spiritual. Jesus Christ died to save us from our sins, and He rose again that we might rise into newness of life. And Jesus Christ, by his death and resurrection, is, indeed, saving us from sin. There is sin enough yet in the world, God knows, and we know. And we do not hide this from our eyes behind the white and gold of our Easter hangings. But the great Helper against sin is in the world also. The great, strong Hero who, Himself, met the worst that sin can do and triumphed, and has promised to help us, and does help us—He is in the world of sin. No wonder that we joy

at Easter. Because we know so surely how the long battle must inevitably go, with Christ upon the side of right. Already, now in the midst of the fighting, wounded as we are, and with the wounded all about us, we raise the cry of victory.

The world is getting better every day. Every Easter finds the heart of man more tender and society more Christian. Every Easter finds the church of Christ, which is the company of faithful people, the men and women whose lives are fashioned after his life—every Easter finds the great church greater. And this is going on, and going on, and going on. The world is larger than the church now. But by and by the church will be larger than the world. And at last the day will come when there will be no hostile world at all, but the church of Jesus everywhere, including everybody. All things shall be subdued unto the Father in heaven, all hearts and minds, all wills, be loyally subject to Him, and He will be King of kings, and Lord of lords, and all in all. And spiritual death, which is the consequence of sin, and must therefore last while sin lasts, but no longer, will be utterly abolished.

Shall we say this also of death physical? Yes: this—but more than this. This kind of

death our Saviour, Jesus Christ, hath abolished already.

Death is only an idea. It is an imagination of the mind. There is no fact corresponding to it. Death is a fallacy. It is a mistaken inference from misunderstood premises. For that which constitutes the real meaning of death physical is the idea that perhaps it is the end.

The eyes close, and silence falls upon the lips, and the heart stops beating, and there is an instant separation. That beloved presence no longer greets and gladdens us. We seem to have nothing left but the lifeless body, and that mocks our hope. And the body is laid in the grave, and the grave is like a great gulf dug across the path of love. We cannot pass over it. They guessed in the old time that the soul was still alive. But that was a guess. After all the inferences and all the arguments of all the wise men, and all the hopes and all the prayers of the saints, the life to come was nothing but a guess.

Oh, that some voice might speak out of the grave to tell us what death means! Oh, that some wayfarer along that lonely and mysterious road might come back to bring us tidings of the undiscovered country! Is death death, or is it birth? Is it the end of life or

only the beginning of new and richer life ?
Is it a curse or is it a blessing ?

And is it not plain that if some messenger had come out of that black wall on the other side of the grave, opening a hidden door in it, and had declared that death is a divine benediction, that this life is but a veil that death lifts and lets us into real life—is it not plain that the revelation of such a messenger would indeed abolish death ? Because it would abolish the old idea of death. Then would be brought to pass the saying that is written, “Death is swallowed up in victory.”

Such a messenger did come. Mary Magdalene sat that Easter morning weeping by the tomb. The race of man had sat for centuries weeping by the doors of tombs. And Mary heard a voice behind her, a voice dear and familiar, speaking her name. And behold, Christ crucified stood alive before her ! The tomb was empty, and He who had lain in it was risen from the dead. “I am He that liveth, and was dead ; and behold, I am alive forevermore, and have the keys of the grave and of death.” And so those old dread mysteries, shut away for ages out of the sight of man, standing closed and locked, and awful beside the way of life—the mystery of death and the secret of the grave—are at last open. The

risen Saviour holds the keys. We can look now through that blank and fearful wall, and, behold, beyond are the gardens of Paradise. We can see across the deep cleft of the grave and, behold, there are pleasures forevermore, and all our dear ones, not dead, but living, living and rejoicing, and alive forevermore. The bitter cry of all the mourning centuries, the cry for light and consolation, for clear knowledge, is answered. The grave opens, as men prayed it might, and one comes back to tell us. And death, we find, means life. And there is no more death. Our Saviour, Jesus Christ, hath abolished death.

Alleluia, then, and jubilation! Shut be the gates of all the cemeteries. No longer let the living be sought for in the company of the dead. They are not there, our loved ones, not there beneath the grass and the spring flowers. We are far nearer to them in the house of Him who has abolished death than we can be there where death seems, to those who have not learned the Easter joy, to have won the victory.

Look not down, with weeping Mary, into the grave. That is not where they are for whose dear presence you are seeking. Look away and up. The dead are not dead. Death hath no more dominion over them. Our Saviour, Jesus Christ, hath utterly abolished death.

THE OTHER SHEEP.

"And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd."—ST. JOHN x. 16.

THIS is not only a revelation of the spirit of Jesus, but a declaration of the kind of spirit which He desires to find in us. For to be a Christian is to be like Jesus Christ. It is to do as He did, to desire what He desired, and to live in his spirit.

Thus He said, "Ye shall be witnesses unto Me," teaching us that our mission as his disciples is to remind people of Him. The apostles were recognized as men who had been with Jesus. That ought to be true of us. One said of another, "He is a good man, but somehow he does not remind me of Jesus Christ." Something is the matter with the Christian who does not make people think of Jesus Christ.

He said also: "As my Father hath sent Me, even so send I you." So that we are not only witnesses unto Him, but his other self, coming upon his own errand, sent to do his work. And these words were not spoken just to those who were to be the ministers of his

church, but to a general company of men and women who were met in his name. They include us all. We are sent even as He was.

Accordingly it means much to us that Jesus was always thinking about the other sheep. The parable of the one lost sheep represents his whole life. He came, as He said, to call not the righteous, but sinners to repentance. He came to seek and save the lost. He was surprisingly interested in the man who was down. Nothing so appealed to Him as need.

Listen, then, to this great word. The Master is proclaiming one of the high purposes of his ministry, and of all ministry: He must bring the other sheep. And this announcement He prefaces with the reason for it, and follows with the result of it; He must bring the other sheep because they are his own; and, having brought them, there shall be one fold and one shepherd.

These other sheep, people who were outside and afar off, unprivileged folk, He called his own. These other sheep He had. They were his, as those were who were evidently near to Him. Jesus Christ cares for people in heathen lands, who worship God in strange, mistaken ways, even as He cares for us. And He has regard to those who live in the slums, as He has to those whose houses front on

good streets with green lawns between. The "masses" are no masses to Him. He knows them, each by himself. He declares that He is the "Good Shepherd" because He knows his sheep. And this includes the other sheep.

All this is so familiar and natural to us that we can hardly realize how strange it seemed when Jesus began to teach and preach it. It all goes back to Him. He was the first missionary. You know how narrow and foolishly and viciously exclusive were the people of his time and neighborhood. The very name "Pharisee" means one who is separate from others. They held themselves apart from the people. It was considered proper and right that the privileged should have no dealings with the unprivileged.

The Pharisees are represented to-day on the religious side by the people who look askance at strangers who chance to sit in their church pew. That curious manifestation of religion is, I suppose, obsolete. Let us hope so. At least it is very seldom heard of nowadays. The Pharisees were of that temper continually. Religion was for them, they felt. Outsiders had no right to it. The church was a kind of club to which nobody ought to be admitted save those who were "in society."

On the social side, the Pharisees are repre-

sented by people who live in the midst of a narrow range of acquaintance. Every day they see the same faces and hear the same voices. They do not know anybody outside that small contracted circle. Sometimes when some of those people escape, and in a college settlement or elsewhere come into conversation with those who live quite different lives, it is like the discovery of a new country. They are amazed to find how interesting other people are. Social life is often as petty and parochial as life in a small country town. It needs to be widened out, and enriched and vivified by that regard for the other sheep, which Jesus felt.

In the midst of this intense exclusiveness Jesus stood quite by Himself and taught the absolutely original doctrine of democracy. The fact is one of many to testify to his difference from other people. He was the only man on the planet who cared for the other sheep.

Thus it was that compulsion was laid upon Him. It was morally impossible that He should say that He had other sheep, and not go on to say, "Them also I must bring." His relationship to them compelled Him; his love compelled Him. You see how of necessity the second sentence grows out of the first.

These sheep of his, wandering without the fold, unfed and unsheltered—can He leave them? *His* sheep, can He forsake them? It is unimaginable.

The difficulty with us is to realize that we have any sheep outside the narrow folds of our own houses. The difference between the reformer, the philanthropist, the friend of the people, and the ordinary respectable but indifferent citizen, is largely a difference in the sense of responsibility. The indifferent citizen has no other sheep. The wider relationship, when it is recognized, compels action. It obliges us to do something. It speaks in St. Paul's word: Woe is me if I preach not the gospel: woe is me if I do not somehow share my privilege with the unprivileged. Them also I must bring.

See, now, how Jesus brings them. We wonder sometimes why it is that our endeavors to help people meet with such scant success. One reason is that we do not undertake that difficult enterprise in his way. We do not speak in his voice. He attaches importance to the tone of voice. They shall hear my voice, He said; and they did hear it. That, He pointed out, was one of the marks of the difference between the Good Shepherd and the other shepherds. The sheep will hear his

voice. They will hear it because it is the voice of a friend.

The essential thing in ministry to others is the fact of friendship. The official cannot greatly help; the institution cannot greatly help. These ministries, excellent and necessary as they are, deal only with the surface of life. They may satisfy for a moment the hunger of the body, they cannot satisfy the hunger of the soul. They cannot change men. They do not touch the will. They do not inspire men to better living. After they have come and gone, the man is still down, still miserable, still holding out his begging hands. The only thing that can lift him up is the hand of a friend. What he needs is that which is expressed in the motto of the Charity Organization Society: "Not alms, but a friend." He waits for the voice of a friend. That, and that only, will he follow out of darkness into light.

This is true not only of those who are socially different from us, but of those who differ from us in opinion, and whom we desire to bring into our fold, into realization of the truth which has helped us. It is of these that Jesus is thinking. The other sheep of whom He speaks are not those who are outside of society, but those who are outside of the church. Them also he must bring, by the in-

vation of his voice. Not by argument, still less by compulsion : by sympathy, by the endeavor after a better understanding, by patience, by brotherliness. That is what is implied in the persuasions of the voice.

“There shall be one fold and one shepherd.” I believe that. I believe that the time will come when the kingdoms of the world will in very deed and truth become the kingdom of the Lord and of his Christ, when the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of God as the waters cover the sea. The missionary is working along the lines of the will of God. That which is mistaken in the religions of the race will be given up, and the manifestation of God in Jesus Christ will become the universal ideal both of God and of man. Christ will be the shepherd, and there will be no “other sheep.”

In the meantime, however, we are divided one from another, even we who call ourselves by his name. One of the reasons why the other sheep do not come into our fold is because the sight of us from the open door is not persuasive. We are in disagreement among ourselves. We know that, however, and are beginning to be properly ashamed of it. But what shall we do? How shall we bring about a better unity? Some say by submission; let

all the people become Episcopalians or Baptists or Roman Catholics and the thing is done.

But that is out of the question. Others say by legislation; let us meet in our ecclesiastical conventions and appoint committees of conference and hold debates, and work out somehow some sort of a compromise or adjustment whereby we may find it possible to live together. That is not impossible. The time will probably come where there will be results in that direction. But it is far away.

In the meantime, we can work together. We can join, irrespective of our differences, in our search for the other sheep. We cannot as yet say either our creed or our prayers together, but we can unite in the actual service of the Lord Jesus Christ. That will bring us together. That will help us to know each other, and to like each other better. Little by little we will come to understand the position of those from whom we differ. We will see how great are the truths in which we heartily agree, and how small the matters in which we fail to concur. Gradually the walls of unfraternal division will fall down. Stone by stone they will drop into the field, where the green and gold of the harvest will cover them up, and they will never be built again. And there shall be one fold and one shepherd.

WHEN THE SPIRIT CAME.

"When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place."—Acts ii. 1.

THEN it was that the sound of the rushing mighty wind was heard, and the sight of the cloven tongues of fire was seen, and the Spirit came.

We must not set too great a distance between that day and this, nor make too great a difference between what happened then and what is always happening in the experience of men. That great wind does not blow, nor does the fire descend upon our heads, nor do we speak with other tongues, to-day. But these, we must remember, were but symbols. The great event of that memorable Pentecost was not the blowing of a wind, nor the burning of a fire, but the entrance of the Spirit of God into the souls of men. And that benediction did not end at Pentecost, nor did it begin then.

For think what is really meant when it is said that the Spirit came. Remember that there is only one God. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are not three gods, but

rather three names of God, describing three distinctions in the nature of God. And when we speak of the Holy Spirit what we have in mind is this: that God who made us, and is the Father, and who revealed Himself among us in Jesus Christ, and is the Son, speaks also in our hearts, admonishes us in the voice of conscience, puts into our minds good desires, stirs us up to worthy deeds, teaches us more and more of the truth. That is what Jesus said: "He will guide you into all truth." And whenever we are guided into truth, into any kind of truth, so that suddenly we catch a new vision of God, or discover a new duty or a new opportunity, and we long to do better and to be better than we have ever been before, then the Spirit of God has come to us as truly as He ever came to Peter or to Paul. And that common day is made a Pentecost.

The Holy Spirit was not born at Pentecost. God had been stirring up the wills of men, and teaching his truth to men, ever since the world began. And every good word that was written in the hieroglyphs of Egypt, or inscribed upon the bricks of Chaldea, or taught by any prophet or any philosopher of any creed or nation the world over, was evidence of the inspiration of the Spirit. And every good deed that was done, the bravery, the devotion, the

love, the loyalty, the self-sacrifice of men, came by the influence of this life-giving Spirit upon the receptive heart.

And ever since that Jerusalem Pentecost the Spirit has been coming, speaking in all worthy speech, thinking in all profitable thought, behind all discovery, all invention, all great movements, all great books and great men.

That was only one of the advents of the Spirit, that event in the upper chamber at Jerusalem.

What we want to know is when the Spirit comes. If it is true, as I have said, that the coming of the Spirit is synonymous with all good thinking and good doing, then it is evidently of the highest practical importance that we should know the conditions of that blessed coming. And the lesson of Whitsunday is that the Spirit comes when God is ready, and when men are ready. The day of Pentecost was fully come: that was God's time. And they were all with one accord in one place: that was their preparation. And then the Spirit came.

Pentecost, as the name implies, was fifty days after Easter. The Lord rose from the grave and appeared to his disciples. But still the world went on about its common business, and the kingdom of heaven seemed no nearer

than before. Pentecost was ten days after the ascension of our Lord. The Saviour disappeared from the sight of the disciples. He blessed them and was taken up. And the clouds came in and hid Him from their sight, and He was seen no more. They went back to Jerusalem and waited. And the days passed, day after day, and nothing happened. The sun rose and set, and men ate their dinners and went along the Jerusalem streets to and from their work, and slept the sleep of the weary. And in the upper room the little company of the faithful said their prayers toward the silent sky. And nothing happened, until, at last, the day of Pentecost was fully come.

God is never in a hurry. That slow waiting for the time to come is but a parable of all the operations of God. It might have been so different. The race might have been led so much more rapidly out of darkness into light. So we sometimes think. Savage nations might have been civilized, heathen nations might have learned the truth of God, such a long time ago. Pain and sin might have been abolished. The cross of Calvary might have been set up in the midst of Eden.

But God knows better than we do. He made the world in which we live by the slow changes of millenniums of centuries. And

thousands of years have gone by since man was created, and yet is the race still remote from perfection.

In the fulness of time the Son of man was born: not a year before. And almost twenty centuries have passed, during which the truth that Christ taught and the life He lived have but gradually, with marvelous slowness, made their way into the hearts and lives of men. So that even to-day only a small part of the inhabitants of the world are Christians even in name; while in Christian lands, the amount of real recognition of the true meaning of Christianity is so small that each one of us doubts the adequacy of his creed: we know, if we are wise at all, that we do not even yet understand all that Jesus taught.

"The faith," we read, "was once for all delivered to the saints." But that does not mean that the saints comprehended it. It means that they had in their keeping the record of the life and words of Jesus. That record they read as they were able, with inevitable blunders. Here is a copy of the dialogues of Plato which is given as a present to a boy. All the wisdom of Plato is once for all delivered to the boy. But he will have to grow to be a man, and a very wise man, before he will discover all the riches of his treasure. So the church

is in possession of the faith. But little by little, through manifold mistakes, tarrying the Lord's leisure, now one truth when the day for that has fully come, and then another upon its own appointed day, the Christian church has grown and is still growing into the knowledge of the revelation of God.

We must not imagine that we know it all; still less that the fathers knew it all. We must not permit ourselves to take up what has been called the "Philistine attitude of finality," nor to resent the idea that even at this late day new truths may be found in the teachings of Jesus which Athanasius and Augustine, Luther and Calvin, never knew. For a thousand years the whole church believed that the death of Christ was a ransom for man paid to the devil. "Not till the sixteenth century was it discovered that the typical Christian was not the monk, but the man who lived a true, godly, beneficent life in the family, in the state, and in connection with his secular calling; and even yet this is not a universally accepted truth." And the statement has recently been made by a theologian of note, that "the chief occupation of theology for the last half-century has been the quest of a lost Christ, and its present joy and ground of hope for the future is the re-

discovery of Him. Christ has been lost in the creeds, lost in the cloister, lost in sacramentarian theories, lost even in the Bible."

The Holy Spirit is always coming, and always teaching, little by little, lesson by lesson, with wonderful slowness but with infinite wisdom, making the present perennially interesting and divine, keeping us from anchoring the living faith amidst the tombstones of the past. The Holy Spirit spoke at Pentecost; yes. And at Nicea and Constantinople, when they framed the creed; yes. And to the fathers who drafted the Articles of Religion and the Westminster Confession; yes. But not to them alone. The Holy Spirit speaks to us. Wherever men are gathered in the name of God to-day to study the word of God, there is God present to guide, to inspire, to speak the earnest word of revelation. And to look back and not up and ahead; to say "thus is it written," and to make that the end of thinking; to give the past a veto upon the wisdom of the present, is to abandon faith in this blessed Spirit of God whose day we keep. God is not dead. God is not silent. God has not abandoned us. God's Day of Pentecost is always dawning somewhere, and the Holy Spirit comes.

This is true not only in regard to the knowl-

edge of God, but in regard to the love of God. The Day of Pentecost, when it was fully come, was a day of awakening zeal. It was the beginning of a new loyalty, of a new service. The men who had always failed to understand Jesus, who had forsaken Him in the moment of his need, who stood afar off when He was crucified, and then went home and locked the doors and windows, trembling and afraid, hurried now into the street eager to preach, fearless of men. The Spirit came, and these men became new men.

That is another illustration of the slowness of God. In the case of every apostle of whose life we know anything, this fact of growth is plain. These men were not born good. They did not come out of school either theologians or saints. Gradually they grew. Now it was a word of Jesus that got into the soul. Or it was some sight that they saw that made an impression upon them. Or as they prayed, a new light of love shone in their hearts. God took his own wise and good time with Peter and with John.

Thus has the whole world grown in goodness, century by century. The Day of Pentecost has fully come year after year, and the Holy Spirit has led the race year after year closer to Christ. And that blessed work is

still going on. This century that is ending is the best that has ever been lived since the morning stars sang together. But the next century will be better.

The patience of God is the foundation of hope. When we see how God waits till the Day of Pentecost is fully come, we know the meaning of all suspense and slowness and seeming stoppage of things. We want the kingdom of God to come, but it tarries long; and the pain and mischief and injustice and falsehood, and bigotry of men make the saints discouraged; and sometimes we feel that the devil must have got the upper hand. But wait. Remember how the fifty days went slowly by. Remember how the Lord ascended into heaven, and the apostles were alone. And it seemed as if the end had come. The services went on as usual before the torn veil of the Temple. Pilate and Herod, Annas and Caiaphas, sat upon their thrones. Barabbas exulted in his freedom. And the darkness followed the daylight, and the sky was silent. But that was only because the Day of Pentecost was not yet fully come.

God is the ruler of this world. Trust Him and He will bring all good to pass. He is but waiting, in his infinite wisdom, for the time to come.

Meanwhile, we have our part to do. The Day of Pentecost was fully come, but it would have gone on into night without the blowing of the wind or the burning of the fire, if the disciples had not been ready for its coming. They were with one accord in one place, and thus the benediction of the Most High descended upon them. Suppose they had lacked accord. They had just been filling the place of Judas by the selection of Matthias. They might have fallen into a discussion of ecclesiastical government. They might have disagreed, with temper. And some of them might have chosen the other candidate, Joseph the Just, and have gone off with him into some other place. That has happened a great many times since then among the followers of Jesus, and represents even to-day the position of the Christian world. Would the rushing mighty wind have blown? Would the cloven tongues of fire have burned? Would the Holy Spirit have come into the divided company?

We know that the Lord came to Jerusalem, and that that was the day of visitation for that city, that was the supreme opportunity for blessing, the Day of Pentecost was fully come. But Jerusalem was in no way ready. The town was full of bigots and hypocrites. The people who lived there thought that all

the truth that had ever been in the world or ever would be was at their fingers' ends. Nobody could teach them. And so selfish were they, so set upon purposes material and unworthy, that they could not have learned anything had they even wished. And the day of blessing came, and the sun went down into the night. And it was dark. The light had shined, but the people had comprehended it not.

We must be ready for the coming of the Holy Spirit. If we are united and brotherly as the apostles were we will have gone a long way in our preparation.

We want the Holy Spirit to come and teach us truth. But we must first learn love. Something more is needed to the discovery of truth than metaphysical cleverness; he who would really know the truth must be a lover of his fellow-men. He must have that open mind which invites the entrance of the Spirit. Every age in which the men who have said, "Only that which I believe is true" have persecuted other men who have replied, "No, but what I believe is true," has been an age of the obscuration of truth. Truth is not advanced by unchristian controversy, nor by trials for heresy, nor by heated debates in religious assemblies. The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth,

brings his revelation to men who meet as brothers, and are with one accord in one place.

We want the Holy Spirit to come and teach us zeal, and to stir up in us a desire for the service of humanity, which is the service of God. But the Spirit waits upon our Christian readiness. The parish in which all who worship together agree together as brothers, is a parish that is sure to be rich in good works. For the Holy Spirit helps. Some day, when the Christian church grows to be as Christian as those first disciples, and our unbrotherly dissensions are abandoned, and we are all one as Jesus prayed we might be, then there will come such a blowing of the Pentecostal wind, and such a blazing of the Pentecostal fire, and such an eloquence of the Pentecostal tongues, that all the world will know that that blessed day of Pentecost for which we pray has fully come, and the Holy Spirit with it. And the time will come to pass of which we dream when the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdom of the Lord and of his Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever,—can you not hear the singing of the triumphal chorus? —King of kings, and Lord of lords.

THE PRAYER-BOOK CHURCHMAN.

"And he had in his hand a little book open."—REV. x. 2.

It is like an antique statue, without inscription. The angel with the book is unidentified. Nobody knows what St. John meant by either the angel or the book.

The space is blank, and we may write in it whatever title pleases us; being reasonably sure that almost any guess will come as near the truth as that of the commentator who said that the angel's name was Luther, and a good deal nearer than that of the other commentator who said that the angel was the Pope. Let us hazard, then, a conjecture of our own. Let us say that the angel is the Church and that the little open book is the Book of Common Prayer.

In what other way can we so graphically describe the church? With what other symbol can we so fitly depict the church that the stately figure may be recognized as St. Andrew is known by his cross and St. Peter by his keys? The church is the angel with the book.

Having taken, now, so much liberty of interpretation as this, let us go on and bring

the vision and the reality into still closer contact, by finding here a symbol not only of the church but of the individual member of the church. This is not the figure of the student: the book is not large enough for that. It is the figure of the Churchman, having in his hand the open book of the church's prayers, and holding it thus open for the purpose not only of petition but of invitation.

I find, therefore, in this unnamed figure a picture of the Prayer-book Churchman.

The first characteristic of the prayer-book Churchman is that he is a Churchman. He believes in the church. He values the social and institutional element in religion.

This he does for two quite different reasons: first, because he reveres the past; and secondly, because he is in sympathy with the present. He looks back into the past and finds the church. It is an institution so natural, so venerable, so associated with the revelation and the benediction of God, so bound up with the life of man, that he does not need to be told that God ordained it. That is plain in the nature of things. Anyhow, the church is there, a fact both patent and potent, to be reckoned with by every man who either writes history or reads it. There it is, the great Christian Society, established by apostles, de-

spised by philosophers, persecuted by pagans, through good report and through evil report making its sure way to the conquest of the Roman empire. On it goes along the path of the centuries, with heresy to the right of it and schism to the left of it; and sometimes the heretics have a stronger hold than the church has upon the truth of God, and sometimes the schismatics in separating themselves from the church have but drawn closer to the love of God,—the Churchman confesses that. On it goes into the pit of sin and misbelief, and emerges on the other side, discredited and divided,—the Churchman confesses that. Nevertheless, the church emerges, the church continues. It has within it a divine principle of revival. True it is that the gates of hell have sometimes seemed to be taken as a model for the architecture of the church porch, but another generation has laid all that as low as the walls of old Jerusalem, and over the new porch is written, "This is the gate of the Lord, the righteous shall enter into it." The Churchman takes all the long history, the good of it and the bad of it, the saints and the sinners, the victory and the defeat, and he sees the hand of God in it plain as the prophets saw it in Israel of old, and thanks God that he is a son of the church.

He believes in the church by reason, also, of his sympathy with the present. For the church stands for organization, for order, for directed movement, for large purposes undertaken under leadership, for social coöperation. And these are modern ideas. These are what men want to-day. Take it in business. The time has passed when a man could succeed by minding his own business. Every man must now work with his fellow-men. He must enter into combination with his neighbors. He either belongs to a syndicate, or a corporation or a trust, or is profoundly influenced by such institutions every day he lives. It was proposed one time in Chicago to abolish department stores by law; they might as well have tried to make the Chicago River run up hill by law. The department store is one of the symptomatic facts of our time. It means that men have found that success is won by centralization.

Whether we will or no, we are all of us being brought together by the compulsion of the tendencies of the time. The trend is away from individualization toward social action, away from congregationalism,—I do not use the word in a denominational sense—toward the church. The great secular forces are asserting and reasserting that the work of the

church, like any serious occupation of man, like the work of the mill, if it is to be a large work, if it is to meet the tremendous needs of the time, must have oversight and guidance and direction and leadership. That is, they are continually arguing for the reasonableness and the necessity of the order of bishops, and are emphasizing the institutions of the church. From premises which the Fathers never heard of, they are drawing conclusions which are as old as Christendom. The spirit of our generation is increasingly a spirit which makes much of institutions. The Churchman is a Churchman because he is in profound sympathy with it.

The second characteristic of the prayer-book Churchman is that he appreciates the prayer-book.

Therein, again, he is in accord with the tendency of the times. For it is evident on all sides and in the most unlikely places that people generally are inclined toward a liturgical worship. Man is naturally ritualistic. Every race, every religion under the sun, bears witness. It is not an unmixed virtue. Often it has tempted men to put an easy ritual in the place of a difficult righteousness. Nevertheless, it is an abiding and universal fact in human nature.

For years and years, a great many of our neighbors have conscientiously repressed this natural tendency. Their ancestors had before them in the person of our ancestors an illustration of the narrow-mindedness, the tyranny, the lapse of Christian fraternity, to which the ritual tendency may lead, and their experience has affected their descendants ever since. Thus many Christian folk refused the music of organs, made their meeting-houses to look as unlike our churches as they could, and put away even the excellencies of the ancient service. Some of them resolved to have no service whatsoever, but to await in simple silence the messages of God.

But to-day that old strong prejudice is growing weak. Human nature is asserting itself. Liturgical services are heard in every street. In Scotland, at least, there are Presbyterian ritualists. Almost all our neighbors have a psalm, have a responsive reading, have an anthem, indicating a desire for that which we believe is to be found at its best in the Book of Common Prayer.

The new services differ from the old as a new table differs from the antique after which it is patterned. The old table has been in the family for generations, and is associated with all the domestic traditions. Here they sat

whose ancient portraits now hang upon the walls, and made their cheer at anniversaries. Here they entertained the guests whose names are pleasant to remember. The carpenter may make another better-looking table; but it will not be this table.

That is how the Prayer-book Churchman feels about the Prayer-book. It is his heritage. It is the precious heirloom which has been handed down to him through all the ages of the church.

At first it was in Hebrew, and our Lord and his apostles used it in the Temple and the Synagogue.

Then the Gentiles came into the church, most of them Eastern Gentiles, speaking Greek; and the Prayer-book was translated into their language. It was the Hebrew Prayer-book put in other words, and set to Christian uses. The psalms, for instance, were retained, but a Christian sentence, an ascription of praise to Father, Son and Holy Ghost, was added to each of them. This Greek book in its perfected form, bearing the name of St. Chrysostom or of St. Basil, is used to-day in the Church of Russia.

By and by, the Gentiles of the West received the gospel, men who spoke Latin. When the Church began, Italy was far away, and the Church in Rome was a Greek mission. St.

Paul, writing to the Romans, wrote in Greek. Now the Latins were converted, and for their use the Greek book was translated into their language. The ancient services were revised and enriched. St. Gregory brought into these venerable devotions whatever religious ideas were characteristic of his time and place, and the book as he made it is used substantially to-day in the Church of Rome.

This was the Gregory who sent Augustine into England. Presently the English were converted. For a long time they were content to use the Prayer-book as it was made in Italy; but not forever. They must have the old book in their own speech. So Cranmer and his associates gave it to them; the old book translated out of Latin into English,—whereof the very words remain in the headings of our canticles and psalms,—the old book changed as the changed times demanded. All that was true in it remained, all that was false or transitory was omitted, all that man had learned in the spiritual experience of a thousand years was added.

Thus the Prayer-book is representative of all the Christian ages. No man wrote it. The book has grown as the church has grown, as the race has grown. The Prayer-book Churchman appreciates it, treasures it, loves it. It

is the book of his Christian ancestors. Saints and martyrs and confessors, scholars and crusaders, statesmen and heroes, have held it open in their hands. And every year he lives, the book means more to him, because he is enabled by every new experience to appreciate it more.

The Prayer-book is not only our most characteristic but our most attractive possession. Dr. Huntington's proposed amendment to the Constitution was not offered in any doubt as to the attractiveness of the book. It did not question the fact that more people come into the church for the sake of it than come for any other reason. No; the proposal to admit a congregation unaccustomed to the service without requiring them at once to use the Book of Common Prayer, is simply the recognition of a fact in human nature. That fact is that people of our race will not be driven. They are not in favor of compulsory prayers. They are of the mind of the preacher in the college chapel who said, "Must I wear the gown? because if I must, I won't." When he was assured that he might do precisely as he pleased, he wore it.

The church in the past has again and again made the mistake of trying to get the Prayer-book accepted by coercion. Archbishop Laud attempted to force it upon Scotland and the

natural result was that the Scotch both refused and hated it. At two notable conferences, one at Hampton Court and the other at the Savoy Palace, the bishops tried to force it upon the Presbyterians. In no case has the policy of compulsion succeeded. It has always defeated its own purpose and must always defeat its own purpose, until there is a radical change in human nature. We can understand that by analogies drawn from our own experience. No man will ever come to love the Prayer-book by being battered over the head with it, even by the hand of a bishop. St. John's angel with the book stands in the attitude of invitation, holding the book open.

A third characteristic of the prayer-book churchman is that he tries to live in the spirit which pervades the book of common prayer. He is a Churchman; and a Prayer-book Churchman; and everybody about him knows it, because he possesses certain distinctive Prayer-book qualities. Especially these two: the quality of proportion, and the quality of devotion.

There is a great deal said in the New Testament about the Christian virtue of proportion, but the word used to express it is "perfection." Our Lord tells us that we ought to be "perfect," and St. Paul says that the purpose

of Christianity is to make us "perfect" men. But what St. Paul means is that we should be men full-grown, rounded, strong, developed on all sides. And what our Lord means is that we should be just and fair toward all men, having a right judgment and the spirit of impartial service. It is plain that to be "perfect," in the common meaning of the word, is humanly impossible. Jesus never set man any task which is humanly impossible. We are to be perfect, he says, as our Father in heaven is perfect. But that perfection is manifested, how? By making his sun to shine on the evil and on the good; by what St. Francis of Assisi called "the great courtesy of God." It is the virtue of proportion.

This quality is manifested in the Prayer-book in two ways: in its attitude toward essential doctrine, and in its attitude toward indifferent opinion.

Every year, in careful order, it teaches the whole round of essential doctrine. Nothing is left out, nothing is over-emphasized, nothing is diminished. It is all there in its true perspective, the creed in the Christian year. The matter is one of such importance, and the number of men having by nature the quality of proportion is so few, that the church does not entrust it to the decision of the minister.

Dr. Shedd, in his "Body of Divinity," is said to have given eighteen times more space to hell than he did to heaven. It shows how theological study may disturb proportion. Dr. Edward Everett Hale is reported to have said that it is an insult to human nature, and a denial of the divinity in man, to kneel down and confess that we are miserable sinners. Nevertheless, we are. And the objection does but serve to show how a cheerful and optimistic temperament may disturb the balance of religion. The Prayer-book takes all possible precautions against these fallacies of perspective, against these failures in the matter of proportion. It provides a time for Christian joy and a time for Christian sorrow; it has both feasts and fasts in its calendar; beginning with the doctrine of the coming of Christ, whereby God became man, it goes on article by article through the Christian creed until it culminates in the doctrine of the Trinity, wherein man contemplates God in his essential being.

This proportion kept in doctrine is maintained also in the realm of opinion. The Prayer-book is not a party book. Each of us claims it, declaring that it is of our opinion; and so it is. It is when we go on to assert that it lends no countenance to our neighbor's opinion, that we fall into error. It is a Cath-

olic book, like the Bible, wherein all honest persons may find themselves at home. The purpose of all its successful translations and enrichments has been inclusive and hospitable. The desire has been to make it the book of as many good people as possible. It is the "low church" book, and the "high church" book, and the "broad church" book, because these party names correspond to human temperaments, and indicate varieties in human nature whose author and maker is God. The Prayer-book is a church book; because it is essential to the being of a church that it shall be large enough for the race. Anything smaller is a sect. If we were all High Churchmen, if we were all Low Churchmen, if we all agreed in our indifferent opinions as we do agree in our essential doctrines, the church would no longer deserve the name of Catholic. It would be a "denomination" rather than a church. It would be a sect. It would lack the quality of proportion.

To this the Prayer-book Churchman adds also the quality of devotion. For him the reason for the church's being is not a sermon but a service. He goes to church to say his prayers, to sing his praises, to worship, to realize God's presence, to bow down in fear and love and adoration. He does, indeed, hear

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sermons gladly,—when they are good sermons—and makes a conscientious effort not to “despise prophesyings” when the sermons are not good. But for him the heart of the service is the service. It is that which is of abiding value and attraction. The debate between the service and the sermon has been going on now for a long time, for at least three hundred years. It can never be rightly settled on either side by the exclusion of the other. The Prayer-book Churchman wants both the service and the sermon, but especially he wants the service. And he finds a great many of his neighbors agreeing with him.

Indeed, in these days of many helpful and inspiring books and of many preachers who are not always helpful and are infrequently inspiring, how long shall it be possible to maintain a habit of church attendance upon the basis of a sermon? Is it worth while to go to church to hear our brother preach? Do we honestly get enough out of it to pay us for the journey? There are, indeed, great preachers, prophets of God, baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire, speaking from the heart of the Eternal to the heart of man, and making it manifestly impossible that preaching shall ever go out of fashion. But the chances are that the great preachers are not in our neighborhood, and

that we do not have great sermons in our parish every Sunday. Why, then, go to church? Why, for the service: to meet God and our fellow-men; to quicken and strengthen in us the spirit of devotion, to get that which is blessedly and bountifully provided for us in the Book of Common Prayer.

The Prayer-book Churchman is filled with the spirit of devotion and he shows it not only in church but wherever else he goes. He is both a righteous and a holy man; he not only does justly and loves mercy, but he walks humbly with his God. He keeps all ten of the Commandments, believing that it is as important to love God as it is to love his neighbor. He tries to live in the realized presence of God. Day by day, as the Prayer-book year proceeds, he tries to follow where it leads him in the path wherein the Master walked. Jesus Christ is very real and very near to him. He asks himself in every alternative, what would He have me do? What would He have me say? And in all this the Prayer-book is his daily friend and guide, giving him both holy thoughts and the words in which to utter them, helping him to pray, helping him to praise, helping him to live aright.

THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE OF GOD.

"There is one God, and there is none other."—**ST. MARK**
xii. 32.

THE Old Testament and the New agree in that assertion. A Jewish scribe said it, and Jesus Christ approved the saying.

Here religion and philosophy are in accord. The saints and the scientists alike maintain the unity of God. Authority and reason go thus far together in the recitation of the creed. God must be one; cannot be other than one. Polytheism is possible only among people who have not learned to think. With the growth of intelligence, with the increase of ability to reason from effect to cause, and so back to the initial cause, the unity of God becomes one of the imperatives of thought. It is out of question that there should be two Gods or three Gods. There is one God, and there is, and can be none other.

The revelation of God is of necessity progressive. All education is progressive. Because all knowledge is conditioned by the mind of him who knows. You may take a

whole ocean of water, but you can get only two pints of it into a quart cup. The water is conditioned, limited, by the cup. Thus is knowledge conditioned by the mind. Truth does not change, but some people know more of truth than other people because of a difference in their capacity for truth.

The highest truth which the mind can touch is truth about God. The supreme knowledge is knowledge of God. But this, like all other knowledge is conditioned by the mind of him who knows. God changes not; but year by year in the life of a man, and age by age in the life of the race, the conception of God changes. It is like the ascent of a hill which overhangs a plain. The plain does not change, does not get wider mile by mile, as the beholder climbs up foot by foot. No, the beholder changes. The higher he gets the more he sees of the plain. Step by step, as the race grows, as the man grows, the human conception of God becomes more adequate, more true; men come to think of God more nearly as He is.

Thus religion grew out of belief in God as many, into belief in God as one. Some see a trace of this old change out of the polytheistic into the monotheistic idea of God in the fact that at the beginning of the Bible the Hebrew

name of God is plural, while the verb which is written with it is singular. Men began to see that the gods of their imperfect creed were but personifications of the attributes of the one God. In and above the gods, men began to find God.

That was a lesson hard to learn. It is evident in the Old Testament that faith in the unity of God won its way little by little. The best men held it, but the people in general were slow to believe it. Even in the psalms, God is often spoken of as the greatest of the gods. Jehovah was held to be the tribal God of Israel. The other nations also had their gods. The highest thought that most people were able to think was that their God was mightier than any other. The revelation of God is slow, but when the new truth is learned it becomes one of the permanent conditions of men's thinking. It is almost impossible to unlearn it. We can scarcely imagine ourselves as believing that there is one god for Massachusetts and another for Pennsylvania, as man believed in the days of Moses and David; nor even that there is one god for the United States of America and another for the Empire of Great Britain.

Perhaps the only trace of that old tribal theology, of that obsolete polytheism, still

surviving in the thought and speech of Christendom, is to be found in the language of those who speak as if the God who is prayed to in the prayers of pagans is somehow not our God but theirs. Others talk of the God of the Old Testament as if He were a God who is now dead. They say all manner of hard words about Him and rejoice that He has been driven out of the throne of the universe. But these people are polytheists only in their language. It would be better if they would speak not of pagan gods but of pagan ideas of God, and not of the Old Testament God, but of the Old Testament idea of God.

All religion, however imperfect and mistaken, is an endeavor after a better knowledge of God. And as men grow, they are able to know more—to know more about everything, even about God: God is able to reveal Himself more and more. At first, every tree is a god. Then there is a god of the trees, and then of all the universe and of man included in it: God is known as one. The savage in the forest cannot understand a God who is love. Love, in that sense, has no place in his vocabulary. You might as well expect a child to understand a demonstration in quadratic equations. The child must be educated up to that: the savage must be educated up to that. Be-

tween the man who believes that God desires him to extirpate the Canaanites,—to kill the whole community of them, with their wives and little children,—and the man who knows that God desires him to love his enemies,—what a diameter of difference! But the difference is not in God; it is in the men.

We have not yet learned all the truth of God. We are not universally sure, for example, that God cares more for deeds than He does for creeds. But we have learned that God is one; we have abandoned polytheism.

The Christian doctrine of God, then, does not mean that there are three Gods. It has sometimes been so taught that this has seemed to be its meaning, but all such teaching is mistaken: God is one. The doctrine of the Holy Trinity begins with that truth and depends upon it, and is to be tested by it. Whatever contradicts that essential assertion about God contradicts the truth.

The Father is God, and the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God; and yet they are not three Gods but one God.

The Father is God. This is the first idea of God, that He is the source of life. This vast illimitable universe about us—where did it come from? These manifold and interminable wonders which are revealed by micro-

scope and telescope and spectroscope—what is the cause of them? This varied life, going on incessantly about us and within us, we ourselves in the midst of this world of marvels,—who can tell the story of the beginning?

There is no proof of the existence of God so irresistibly convincing as to make denial impossible. There is no infallible demonstration of the existence of God. There is, indeed, “an unreasoned consciousness of dependence on a Being or Beings who are to us invisible,” and this is emphasized by arguments from the appearance of order and design in the world about us, and from the mental and spiritual nature of man. For most people these assurances are abundantly sufficient. But there is no proof, so that one may point to it as to a demonstration in geometry, saying, “Behold, and be convinced!”

Religion, like science, begins with an act of faith. Science begins with the assertion that nature exists,—an assertion, which, as every philosopher well knows, is not capable of proof. And religion begins with the assertion that God exists. Back of all causes is God the Father, infinite, absolute, eternal, the source of all life. When we look up into the night sky, out among the illimitable ranges of the stars, and think; when we pronounce the name of

God ; it is God the Father whom we have in mind.

But we desire to know God. Of what avail is it to think of God, if all our thoughts must be punctuated with question marks and we can get no answers? What is God like? What is the relation of God to us? Especially, what does God think about us? does He care about us? does He love us? We crave a revelation of God.

How shall such a revelation be made? Shall God write a sentence across the gleaming sky? shall He make his voice to be heard in the thunder? shall He drop down a great book out of the clouds, containing the creed, the Lord's prayer, and the ten commandments, and all other things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health? Or shall He make his revelation in a language which we all can read, in a tongue which the whole race, wise and unwise, will be able to understand, and in such a form that the revelation shall be forever free from all bondage to the letter, from all which might limit and hamper human thinking?

How can there be such an ideal revelation? In the person of a man; in a life which may be lived among us to teach us how to live, which shall be a daily discovery of God, which

shall make plain, so that all may know it, how God cares and loves. Give us a revelation in humanity.

And so God became man, manifested Himself in the person of a man. We need a new word about God to express this new idea about God. To our faith in God the Father, we add our faith in God the Son.

But God is one. The Son is not in any respect a different God from the Father. God the Son is God the Father revealing Himself. And yet there is a difference in these two ideas of God. It is the difference between existence and manifestation, between thought and speech, between truth and the utterance of truth. The whole of truth cannot be put into any expression of it; the whole of the thought is never voiced in the words; after all possible manifestations of God, there are untold and unimagined attributes which are not manifested. Try to put into words the beauty of a picture: after all is said, how much eludes the speaker! Thus God the Son manifests as much of God the Father as can be manifested. Jesus did not reveal the infinity nor the eternity of God. What He did reveal was God's relation to us, especially in his hatred of sin and his love for us.

It is significant that no theologian thinks of

asserting that God the Father became incarnate. It was God the Son: that is, that side of the being of God which is closest to our moral life, and which we have most need to know. We ask our longing questions, and we get answers in the life and words of Jesus Christ. Does God pity us when we are in trouble, and sympathize with us? Yes, for Christ died. Does God really love us? Yes, for behold the cross.

But we are not yet satisfied. God manifested Himself in Jesus Christ, but the world was already old when He walked in Galilee; for ages men had laid away the dead. All these dead folk, who died before the manifestation of God was made, and had no chance to look into the face of Christ,—had God, then, no word for them? And nearly nineteen centuries have passed since Jesus Christ ascended into heaven and has since been seen no more. We can, indeed, read the story which they wrote who touched his hands and heard his voice; but is there nothing more than that? Must we believe that God, out of the infinite reaches of space, manifested Himself among us for a brief time, and then somewhere went away again?

No, we have a better truth concerning God than that. God speaks in our hearts. God

has always spoken in the hearts of men. God is ever present. He lives in all life, and thinks in all thought, and is behind all progress, the unceasing helper, the untiring guide, the inspirer of all that is worthy in the mind of man. This is another truth about God, and we need another word to express it. We believe in God the Father, and we believe in God the Son, and we believe now in God the Holy Ghost. But there is one God, and there is none other.

The word "person," which the old creed-makers used to express these different ideas of God, saying that there are three "persons" in one God, has given rise to endless confusion. With us a person is an individual. We take our common meaning of the word and try to translate with it the statement of the doctrine of the Trinity, and we find ourselves in the midst of arithmetical impossibilities. We puzzle ourselves over the problem of three in one. But this word "person" comes into English out of Latin, and in Latin was a blundering translation of a wiser word in Greek. It means "distinction." There is one God in threefold distinction. The divine nature is complex as our human nature is. And there are these three ways of thinking about God, corresponding to the being of God, ways which

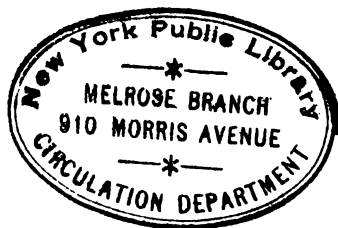
are not only true but essential, so that if we are to think of God aright we must think of Him in all these ways.

God is the source of life, the infinite, the eternal—the Father.

God has manifested Himself to us so that we may know Him and love Him, and know that He loves us, in the plainest and most universally understood of all possible manifestations, in a human personality, the Word become flesh—the Son.

And God is ever present with us, speaking to all men everywhere, in the past and in the present, teaching, warning, inspiring—the Holy Spirit.

Thus the doctrine of the Trinity, taking that old truth that God is one, and holding to it draws new truth out of it. It is an advance upon monotheism, as that was upon polytheism. It meets the longings of the heart. It answers the eager questions of the race. It satisfies, for the present, our search for God. It is the supreme statement which human reason, aided by divine revelation, has been able to make of the nature of God.





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